DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 192 PS 030 880

AUTHOR	Wolkoff, Sandra, Ed.; Schwartzberg, Neala S., Ed.
TITLE	Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 2002.
INSTITUTION	North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center, Roslyn Heights, NY. Lindner Early Childhood Training Inst.
ISSN	ISSN-0887-0365
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	118p.; For 2001 newsletters, see ED 465 435. Published 10 times per year.
AVAILABLE FROM	North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center, The Parent and Preschooler Newsletter, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215 (English Edition, $32 for 1-year subscription; English/Spanish Edition, $52 for 1-year subscription). Tel: 800-595-9365 (Toll Free); Tel: 516-626-1971; Fax: 516-626-8043; Web site: http://www.northshorechildguidance.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Multilingual/Bilingual Materials (171)
JOURNAL CIT	Parent and Preschooler Newsletter; v17 n1-10 Jan-Nov/Dec 2002
LANGUAGE	English, Spanish
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Aggression; Bereavement; Child Health; *Child Rearing; Death; Disabilities; Discipline; Gardening; Grief; *Multilingual Materials; Newsletters; Nutrition; *Parent Child Relationship; Pets; *Preschool Education; Pretend Play; Reading Aloud to Others; School Readiness; Science Activities; Sibling Relationship; Violence
IDENTIFIERS	Family Activities

ABSTRACT

This document consists of 10 monthly newsletter issues for 2002, in English- and Spanish-language versions, exploring topics related to early childhood behavior and parenting. Regularly appearing features include book recommendations, "Library Resources," "Preschoolers in the Kitchen," "Kids Crafts," "Research News," and "The Health Corner." Major topics of the newsletter issues are as follows (1) pretend play (January); (2) raising children with special needs (February); (3) aggressiveness in children (March); (4) reading aloud (April); (5) children's eating habits (May); (6) school readiness (June); (7) daily discipline (July-August); (8) parenting skills related to patience, persistence, consistency, self-awareness, and humor (September); (9) children's grieving (October); and (10) science for young children (November-December). (KB)

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Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 2002. (English and Spanish)

Sandra Wolkoff, Editor
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Editor

North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center, Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

2002

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 1 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | January - 2002

Make-Believe Play

"Let's build a doghouse."
"But, I don't have a dog. Can my cat sleep there?
"Sure, you can be the cat, and I can be the dog."

Two friends are playing together with large wooden blocks in the daycare center. They are planning a structure and are negotiating the terms of the pretend game. I watch them as they carefully place one block on top of the other. They are cooperating, taking turns placing the blocks, and giggling a lot each time a block falls down. They are also discussing the food the animals will eat, with much gesturing and loud noises.

These boys are having fun doing what seems to come naturally to most children; they are playing make-believe. Obviously, they are good players and need very little help in planning their adventure. There are many children who do not play as imaginatively and as effortlessly as these two do. With the help of parents and teachers, however, all children can learn.

Ingredients for Make-Believe Play

After over 30 years of research on play, it is clear to me that there are certain basic ingredients that help foster more imaginative games.

There needs to be a person who sanctions the play, who accepts the silly antics of a child and who makes no judgmental statements, even when the play becomes outlandish or downright goofy.

There needs to be space for play. This can be a corner of a room or a corner of a kitchen table. This "sacred space" is important to the child. If she wants to leave a structure standing overnight, the parent or teacher should permit this within reason. How delightful to find your fort or castle intact the next day!

There needs to be time to play. These days children are so overwhelmed with structured activities and

appointments, or long hours in daycare, that we forget that they need time at home to just play, daydream, and enjoy being with a parent or friend in conversation or in sharing a story.

Finally, children need some simple props or unstructured toys (blocks, LEGO, dress-up clothes, miniature people and vehicles, dolls, puppets, audio tapes, and books to name a few).

It is interesting to note that 75% of the toys that will be available in the United States this year will have a computer chip inside them. One can only wonder what these electronic toys will do to a child's language skills, imagination, and ability to become a creative and divergent thinker if the toys are programmed to offer them specific words and phrases.

Stages of Play

When the play of children is examined, it is helpful to look at it through the lens of a stage approach, recognizing that play serves different purposes at different ages. Jean

Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, separates play into three major periods: imitation and practice play; symbolic play, what we usually think of as pretend play; and games with rules, such as board games and other common children's games.

Imitation

Imitation, the earliest form of play, starts at birth and goes up to about twenty-four months. The infant copies the sounds and actions of the people or animals in the environment like the words "bye-bye" or a hand wave. These actions, usually reinforced by the adult's enthusiastic smiles of approval, are pure imitation without true understanding of what they mean. A toddler may pick up a toy telephone and say "goodbye" or wave "bye-bye" to someone entering a room. Only later, as the toddler moves into the stage of symbolic play, will the words and motor movements match appropriately.

Practice play leads to mastery of motor skills. When infants in their cribs swat at mobiles to make them move, or toddlers stack cubes or blocks, put plastic sticks into jars or scribble with fat crayons they are developing fine and large motor skills.

Symbolic Play

Symbolic, or pretend, play emerges around the age of two. What is symbolic play? It can be a familiar activity performed in a different situation but without the right equipment and tools. Washing a doll in a pretend tub is an example. It can be something that is simply illogical and impossible – pirates who sail away after their boat sinks. Treating inanimate objects as if they are real – trying to feed a stuffed animal – is another example. Of course, there's also a child pretending to do an adult job such as delivering the mail or being an astronaut.

At this stage, from ages two to seven, children are egocentric, believing that what they feel or think is experienced by others around them. Until they learn otherwise, they also believe that everything that moves is alive, such as a leaf blowing in the wind or a burning candle. They tend to see cause-and-effect where no relationship exists, for example that the whistle of a train is responsible for its movement.

Because the young child thinks illogically, from an adult point of view, sitting down and talking to youngsters and entering into their world offers adults a charming and intriguing glimpse of the inner workings of their minds.

The peak period for imaginative play, or what I call the "high season of play" is between ages three and five when children are heavily engaged in symbolic play, the substitution of objects for real items. A wooden block can become a brick of a house, or even a telephone if one needs to call the "doctor" to tend a sick doll. A large empty box can become a submarine, a space ship, or a pirate ship. Indeed, children are inventive.

Pretend play begins with the child as the only actor but gradually grows to include a whole cast of others. A child feeds a doll, but the child is active while the doll remains passive. Gradually, the doll becomes more active: walking, talking feeding another doll or the "mommy."

Children also move from solitary to social pretend play, where they interact with other children and take on various roles. In the beginning, a toddler will play alone – move a truck along the floor, imitate a cat or dog by crawling along the ground or rock a doll in a cradle. Toddlers may even play side by side but their major focus is still on their own play.

At about age three, cooperative social pretend play begins. At first children may take turns and share during their play, and engage in simple games such as hide-and-seek. But they don't develop the imaginative scenarios of doctor-patient, or parent-baby. They don't assume different roles, change voices, or carry out a story.

These more elaborate scenarios begin to emerge about ages four to six. Eventually, other children are brought in to play roles, in some cases until a whole cast of actors has been assembled.

Games with Rules

The development of games with rules is the last stage in Piaget's theory of play. At around age seven children begin

A Year-Long Treat

📖 *Raising Healthy Children - Day by Day* by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain; Free Spirit Publishing; Minneapolis, MN 2001; (612) 338-2068, www.freespirit.com

A book of daily readings with a succinct quote to get you thinking and a bit of an elaboration, to get you thinking even more. They are sometimes funny ("If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one?" - Abraham Lincoln), sometimes informative ("We should consider touch as essential as diet and exercise are to the growth and well-being of children." - Tiffany Field, Ph.D.) and sometimes eye-opening ("That is what our children can offer us, and what we can offer them: a chance to learn from them, even as we try to teach them." - Robert Coles). It's based on the highly respected Search Institute's developmental assets – the good things children need to grown on. The book is a joy to read and fun to put into action.

to move away from pretend play and involve themselves in rule-based games. Some, such as "Take a Giant Step" and hopscotch, are institutional, having been passed from generation to generation with only minimal changes. Children learn these games either by direct instruction from older children or by observation and imitation.

Benefits of Play

Play is good for us – child and adult alike. Children exercise fine motor movements when they play with puzzles or with miniature figures. Youngsters practice motor skills through climbing, riding a tricycle, hopping, running, and jumping. They enlarge their vocabulary, acquiring many different words, and improve their expressive language when engaged in a make-believe game. If a child is playing "restaurant," a teacher or parent can define the words *menu*, *waiter* or *waitress*, and *bill* or *check*. While playing make-believe games children learn to sequence, think logically, and learn the correct order of events. Children share, take turns, and cooperate when they play make-believe. Children also learn to become flexible. If they do not have a toy airplane, any long thin prop can substitute.

Controlling impulsive behavior and delaying gratification are major benefits of make-believe play. It teaches kids patience and a one-step-at-a-time attitude. A youngster can't enjoy a tea party until the water is boiled, the clay cookies are made, and the table is set. If a child becomes aggressive and tries to hit another child, a teacher will quickly remove the obstreperous youngster. Children learn, therefore, to curb their negative impulses, and to express their anger through words. It is more exciting to be part of the pretend scenario than to sit on the sidelines.

In some forms of imaginative play children can work out their feelings. If the mother has scolded a child, it is not uncommon to see that child scolding her doll. If a child is jealous about the arrival of a new baby, a child can enact feelings of anger, jealousy, and later acceptance of this rival through puppet play. And finally, it is just plain fun to play. Children who are good pretend players have more positive affect, smiling and laughing more than children who do not engage in make-believe play.

Play is a major part of the preschooler's life, but it need not stop as a child gets older. Instead, earlier forms become woven into later play. The sensory play of the infant can be found in the adult's enjoyment of trickling sand between the toes or the playful splashing in a pool. Mastery play and games with rules are in evidence when the adult perfects a tennis or golf stroke, or

studies a new move in a game of chess. Symbolic or pretend play is manifested in amateur theatricals, costume parades, in writing poetry or prose, and by simple daydreaming.

Play and Learning

To start, try to get in touch with your own playfulness. Remember the games you played when you were young. Watch your children at play and see what delights them. When they become frustrated or stuck in a pretend game, you can then offer an idea or two to keep the game going or become the initiator of a new game.

Your support and encouragement helps promote children's engagement in fantasy, imagination, and pretend play. Allow your children to direct the play on their own once it gets under way. Reading to your child (either poetry, fairy tales or simple stories) or listening to songs together can stimulate ideas for a pretend game. For example, your youngster may choose to play the role of one of the characters.

Simple props such as puppets, dolls, miniature characters and animals, large boxes, blocks, dress-up clothes and household objects, such as plastic dishes and spoons, are useful for pretend games. An old sheet over a table makes a good tent for hideouts for a game of pirates, or for a cozy "cabin." A toy parade can be fun as you march to music made of pots and pans and wooden spoons for drums, and a rattle made from two paper plates stapled together filled with popcorn or beans. A large box can take you on a voyage to outer space, an airplane ride, or a trip to the zoo. Here is an opportunity for a

parent to point out the sights along the way as the child makes motor noises and imitates the animals he sees.

Playing with children can be an adventure for both parent and child. It will open the world to children while encouraging imagination and creativity. Indeed, research has found that children who use pretend play when they are young will maintain their creative spirit and remain original thinkers as they get older.

Dorothy Singer, Ed.D. is Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Psychology at Yale University. She is also the author (with Jerome Singer, Ph.D) of "Make- Believe: Games and Activities for Imaginative Play." Washington DC: Magination Press, 2001. They have also written "The House of Make-Believe." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Dear Reader

Fantasy and imagination. Too often we think of them as frivolous. The "stuff" of dreams perhaps but not anything really useful. But we'd be wrong to dismiss such creativity. It fuels our goals, transforms our lives, and is also a very good vehicle for learning.

This month Dorothy Singer, Ed.D. writes our feature on the importance of imagination and how play and imagination promote learning and social development. Dr. Singer has been writing about the importance of play for many years and we're delighted she's agreed to share her wisdom with P&p readers.

We also have a piece based on an interview with Tim Rollins who uses creativity as a social force, and in the process helps kids create world class art. Let's not ignore the playground. Rusty Keeler tells us how we can transform this humble area into a multi-sensory adventure.

Nicola Schwartzberg

Let the Games Begin

Make-believe games encourage cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Jerome Singer and I have been involved in a project directed toward parents, homecare providers, and staff at daycare and Head Start centers to teach children specific make-believe games that encourage skills children need for kindergarten. The idea underlying our project is that teachers and parents can successfully teach vocabulary, colors, shapes, numbers, manners, and knowledge about everyday events through play, rather than through formal education.

We gave tests to children that measured these kinds of knowledge and skills both before and after training. We found that children who played these specific make-believe games scored significantly higher on these tests compared to children who had not experienced such training.

Here are some of the activities that we use with our parents and teachers.

The Restaurant Game

This game creates the experience of setting up and going to a restaurant. You probably didn't realize how much is involved, and how many skills can be learned. Here's how to go through it step-by-step.

Pretend you and your children are going to a restaurant for a birthday party. Make up a name for the restaurant. Decide who will be the waiter or waitress and who will be the birthday person.

Set up a table and chairs - one for each child (or stuffed animal) who will sit around the table. Help your child decorate placemats making circles, squares and triangles. Set the table using paper plates and utensils. Using colored clay or play dough make a cake and use toothpicks for candles. Have paper and pencil ready for the order pad. Make some play money. Make a pretend menu and decorate it. Scribbles are fine for food names.

As the children set the table, count the place mats, and utensils. Later on, count the candles and when paying the bill count the play money.

Make a pretend call to the restaurant and tell them how many people are coming. When you get there, the waitress comes to take the order and scribbles this on her pad. The children can make-up the food they want to order. The waitress brings the food. There can be lots of "thank you" and "you're welcome" when being seated and when giving and taking food orders.

At the end of the meal, the waitress brings the birthday cake and a wish is made. The child counts the candles and can blow them out. The waitress says "excuse me" and clears the table. She brings the bill. Using play money, the child counts out the amount out loud. The waitress says "thank you" and the game is over.

The Submarine Game

This game is about our brave explorers who are going down to the bottom of the ocean floor to find a buried treasure. All you need are boxes to become submarines. If you don't have any boxes you can use cushions.

The children can decorate the boxes and learn the names of colors as they use them. They can make a map of the ocean floor and put an X where a treasure will be. The children get into the box or sit on the cushion and count to ten as we all gone down. Let them make lots of noises heading to the ocean floor. When we all reach the ocean floor we put on our special suits that keep us dry and provide air for us to breathe. We look for the treasure using our map. We see colored fish and name the kinds we see and their colors. Finally, we see the treasure box. As the children open it up and see the treasure they name all the colors and the shapes of the jewels. We see round, square and triangle jewels. Finally, we put the box in the submarine, and up we go, counting to ten.

Dorothy Singer, Ed.D.

Adding SOUL to Your Playground

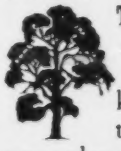
Playgrounds can be amazing gathering places for people of all ages. Your environment can be a living, growing space where folks from the neighborhood can meet and children can safely play and learn about the natural world around them. A safe play structure is a wonderful start for your new environment, but the equipment is only the beginning. The real Soul of the Playground comes from what you add to the space surrounding the play structure.

To begin, take a minute to sit back and think about your own childhood experiences. Where was your favorite outdoor place to play? What was that environment like? What were the smells and sounds? What did you do there? What did it look like and feel like and how did it change over the seasons? That place was your introduction to the environment and the cycles of life.

Now think about your new playground. How can you add nature? Art? The change of seasons? Local history? Your community is a one of a kind place: your play environment can be too.

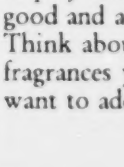
Nature

So often the places that adults remember playing in are natural places, and not playgrounds at all. I've heard stories from adults about playing in creeks, under willow trees and even in huge dirt piles in vacant lots. You can easily bring in these play opportunities with elements of nature that are unique to your area. When considering plants, think about their *play value*. Play value of plants refers to plants that create hiding spaces; drop fun play props such as leaves, nuts or seeds; allow safe climbing; or make sounds in the wind. Plants can also be wonderful for children with disabilities, many plants have interesting smells and textures. Strategically planted trees and shrubs can help create shady spots around your play environment, as well as cut down on wind or the noise of traffic. Plants can also attract birds and other wildlife.



Trees

Plant different kinds of trees throughout your play space. Find out which trees grow best in your area. Choose a variety for extra interest. Other things to consider when selecting trees: What final height is best for your site? Which spot has sunlight and access to water? Where do you want shade? Are there underground utility lines that need to be avoided?



Herbs

Many herbs are extremely hardy and perfect to plant in play areas. They smell good and are safe to eat. Think about what fragrances you might want to add to the play space and where to plant them. It's also fun to include herbs that we use in food such as oregano or basil so children can see where they actually come from. Other good choices are peppermint, rosemary, sage, spearmint and thyme. There are some varieties of herbs such as creeping thyme that grow nicely between stepping stones. When you walk on them, smells drift up to your nose.

Hills

Earth mounds and grassy hills can be added to create imaginative landscapes. Shapes can be free-flowing and abstract or can represent animals such as a serpentine snake or the back of a turtle.

Art

Are there artists in your community who could be recruited to help? Sculpture, murals, wind chimes, benches, tables, railings, garden gates, and stepping stones are just a few of the possibilities. For young artists, your project could be a great place to publicly show off their talents.

Sound

Sound elements can add a whole different layer to your playground. ThunderDrums to pound on can be made from 55 gallon plastic barrels found at car washes. Turn them upside down and mount them to posts or a fence. Fists can be used to pound on them or mallets can be made from dowels with softballs or lacrosse balls fastened to the end. Be sure to secure the mallets to the drums with cable.

Cow bells and other chimes can be hung in trees and shrubs. Talk Tubes can be made from lengths of PVC tubing with connectors and right-angle elbows. A child in one spot on the play can whisper into the tube and a child on the other end can hear the words. The tubes could be mounted to a fence or sunk in the ground. Be sure to angle the end down to keep rain out of the tubes.

Good luck with your playground planning and have fun thinking about how to add *soul* to your environment. Remember you are creating the childhood memories of the kids who will be using your playground. Help make them warm, rich, diverse, safe, green, surprising, and loving memories.

Rusty Keeler has worked as a designer for Kompan/Big Toys in Olympia, Washington, and playground manufacturer Speelhout in the Netherlands. He returned to the US in 1996 to start Planet Earth Playscapes.

Adapted from ***Adding Soul to Your Playground*** by Rusty Keeler, http://www.earthplay.net; Planet Earth Playscapes; 407 Turner Place; Ithaca, NY 14850; 800 859-4580.

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Helping Kids Grow Through Art

Recently *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* interviewed Tim Rollins, a conceptual artist who became a special education teacher and ended up the founder and moving force behind the KOS - Kids of Survival, an arts program in the South Bronx of New York City, an area with a high concentration of social problems. The program is funded solely through the sale of the children's art to museums and galleries. Although he lives in New York, Rollins travels all over the world doing programs with children.

The program sounds simple, even obvious. Encourage kids to create art and they'll feel good about themselves. In fact, its done in schools all the time. But Rollins has little patience for these "feel good" projects, especially for kids growing up under harsh circumstances. "They do a little drawing and people patronize them and tell them how wonderful it is," says Rollins. He believes these well-intentioned programs fall short. "The kids say 'how do you know that it's good?'"

Rollins' program is different. "I call it hard fun," says Rollins, and he has clear and rigorous standards. "When you have standards you can have achievement," says Rollins. This art isn't for the family refrigerator, it's for institutions that demand excellence and Rollins' kids meet that demand. "When the Museum of Modern Art in New York, or the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington or the Tate Gallery in London say their work is good that spreads into the most amazing form of confidence," says Rollins. "It's fantastic to participate in works of enduring excellence."

Rollins likes to use a piece of classical literature as a starting point. One of his favorites is Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* with the kids taking on the role of Puck. "Puck doesn't follow the rules, and he transforms things. He turns people into donkeys and makes people fall in love through the power of illusion." In particular Rollins uses the scene in which Puck, into mischief as always, goes and gets the flower whose magical juice has the power to make a person fall in love with the first living creature seen upon awakening. "I ask the kids to pull the flower out of their imagination and will it into reality."

The kids don't just draw a flower or two and receive praise, or feel they've created a work of art. The kids end up drawing 50 or 60 flowers. Rollins tells them "you know you've got it right when it is a flower no one else could make but you. And I've never seen it before."

The art also stimulates children to construct their own reality, something that is particularly important when the world around those youngsters could use a bit of reinventing. Rollins believes that if you can create art you can recreate your life. To make art "you must be able to imagine a different reality," says Rollins, "to make the invisible visible, make vision visceral, and make hope material. And when you can do that on a piece of paper you are more confident in your life."

For these kids art becomes more than a means of survival. "The kids who stay here don't fail," says Rollins. "The kids give up drugs. They graduate high school, even receive scholarships for college." Because the program has been going for 20 years, one generation is becoming a role model for the next. "The little kids see how the older kids turned out and they want to be like them. Now they have living proof their lives can be changed."

Doing Art with Your Children

Here are some of Tim Rollins' suggestions for bringing the structure and creativity of art into your children's lives.

Ask them to draw the scariest monster they can possibly imagine. Or, what the monster under the bed looks like. Don't stop after one or two drawings. Ask them to make monster after monster. After they do it more and more something happens, the monster becomes more and more their creation (and it's hard to be terrified of something you created and can therefore change).

Another possibility is to chose a piece of text as an inspiration and starting point. A play, a fable, a story book can be a spring board for imagination and learning.

In one of Rollins' programs he starts with passages from the chorus of *The Frogs* by the Greek writer Aristophanes in which the frogs sing simply for the joy of singing. "We play with the project: listen to frog noises, read natural history texts." He asks the kids to portray their lives and their joy in the form of a frog. "The kids make hundreds of drawings and we make them into transparencies and make huge enlargements."

You can also ask your youngsters to represent their hand in 50 different ways and make a book out of it. If the children do this in a group they can inspire each other to improvise and embellish, with each child encouraging the creativity of the other children.

Doctor, I'm concerned about Johnnie, he's not talking yet.

Commonly, parents approach their pediatricians with concerns about their child's development. Although parents often know that children develop along their own individual pathways, they often compare their child to others, then worry about the result, fearing their child is delayed.

Developmental delays exist when a child's abilities or capacities are less than what is typically expected for children of the same age. Examples of delays would be the six-month-old infant who does not make eye contact, the fifteen-month-old child who is not pointing to communicate his needs or the three-year-old youngster who does not speak in two word sentences, such as "drink juice" or play ball."

If there is cause for concern, your pediatrician or other child specialist may suggest that your child be seen for a developmental assessment. The process highlights a child's strengths and potential weaknesses and identifies any existing delays.

Early identification of these delays is critical. Early Intervention programs help many children catch up to their peers, while others are helped to achieve their highest developmental level.

➢ **Assessment Areas**

During an assessment specialists look at several areas.

Gross motor development reflects how well young children can use their large muscles to control their heads, roll over, sit alone as well as begin walking, jumping, climbing stairs.

Fine motor development reflects how well they can use the small muscles of their fingers to grasp rattles, reach for a colorful toy, stack blocks, or push buttons.

Language/ communication development reflects how well children can use language to express their thoughts and ideas and understand the communication of others.

Cognitive development reflects a child's ability to think and reason. Infants show a leap in development, for example, when they realize the wiggling fingers they see at the end of their hands not only belong to them but are under their control.

Social and emotional development refers to the way children relate to others.

Coping skills unfold as children deal with difficult and stressful situations. Can a child wait while Mommy is preparing the feeding, calm himself when are stressed?

Self help skills are the ways in which infants take care of their own needs; rock themselves to sleep, or help themselves get dressed.

In addition to these standard and well-established areas, child development specialists also look at other areas now considered to be equally important. These include children's:

- Level of trust and their emotional connections to their parents, siblings and other important people in their lives.
- Sense of self, how children see themselves.
- Relationships with play mates and friends.
- Ability to solve problems.
- Ability to move, balance, and coordinate their bodies.

➢ **Perspectives on Assessment**

The process of developmental assessment looks at both strengths and weaknesses. Infant's abilities and areas of strength are used to encourage the development of other weaker areas. For example, an evaluation may reveal a delay in motor development and a strength in the baby's ability to relate to others. The physical therapist can use the infant's ability to relate to people as a way to encourage the use of motor skills.

A team approach is often used in which various professionals provide their individual perspectives to develop an accurate and dynamic portrait of a child. These may include psychologists, developmental pediatricians, nurses, occupational, physical and language therapists, and special educators.

A developmental assessment may use natural observation of the child in a variety of settings as well as results of standardized tests that compare a child's performance to the normal average child.

Passage of federal legislation and the resulting Early Intervention Program ensures that children and their families have access to assessment and any needed services. This means that as children grow and develop, no child is left behind.

Fran Brenner MS, RN, NP is a nurse practitioner specializing in newborn and infant development. She has a private practice on the upper west side of NYC conducting parent counseling on infant development, and dyadic parent-infant relationship work.

➢ **Parent Resources** on Early Childhood Development: These organizations provide expert advice and information to parents and child care providers.

- **Zero to Three**: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families: 2000 M Street NW, Ste. 200 Washington DC 20036 (202) 638-1144 www.zerotothree.org
- **I Am Your Child** www.iamyourchild.org
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children** 1509 16th Street NW Washington DC 20036-1426 www.naeyc.org
- **National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education** US Department of Education Ordering Information: ED Pubs; P.O. Box 1398 Jessup, MD 20794-1398 www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI
- **National Parent Information Network** www.npin.org

Library Resources

Play Imagination Fantasy

Books for Parents

📖 ***Go Anywhere Games for Babies*** by Jackie Silberg; Robbins Lane Press (a division of Gryphon House); Beltsville, MD, 2000; www.robinslane.com; Spiral bound.
What to do with a bored infant? How to play little games with your youngster? This book supplies the answers, at least for parents of children birth to one year. The activities are divided by age and are color-coded for purpose, including counting, listening and observing, body awareness, and more. It's a gentle book full of simple games that you can play anywhere.

Books for Kids

📖 ***The Big Sneeze*** by Ruth Brown; Mulberry Paperback; New York; 1997; Softcover $4.95. The farmer is asleep in the barn. Suddenly he gives a huge sneeze starting a cascade of events that ends up causing chaos.

📖 ***Good Night, Gorilla*** by Peggy Rathmann; Puffin Books; New York; 2000; Softcover $5.99. The zookeeper is making his rounds saying "Good Night" to all the animals. Behind his back the naughty gorilla is letting the animals out of their cages. Soon there's a parade of animals following the zookeeper home. His wife leads them all back, except that gorilla, who is still tip-toeing behind her. A sweetly funny book.

📖 ***The Great Pig Search*** by Eileen Christelow; Clarion Books; New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.00. One day Bert and Ethel's pigs escaped from the back of their truck. Bert is upset and humiliated and when a postcard arrives from Florida with the message "Oink," he decides to take a vacation, to Florida. Once he's there all he does is look for the missing pigs, who pop up everywhere and end up saving his life.

📖 ***Huggly and the Toy Monster*** by Tedd Arnold; Scholastic; New York; 1998; Paperback $3.25. Another in the delightful *Monster under the Bed* series. In this story Huggly takes a toy monster that looks just like him. When he goes to return it to the human child he ends up gift-wrapped as a birthday present. He is the hit of the party but is grateful and relieved to be rescued by his friends.

📖 ***Katie and the Sunflowers*** by James Mayhew; Orchard Books (Scholastic), New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.95. On a visit to the art museum Katie discovers that she can reach into Sunflowers by Vincent van Gogh and (oops) ends up knocking over the flowers, taking them right out of the painting. Soon, paintings by Gauguin and Cezanne also come to life. There's wonderful art-filled pandemonium. A great way to introduce children to some of the postimpressionists.

📖 ***Little Whistle*** by Cynthia Rylant; illustrated by Tim Bowers; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 2001; Hardcover $14.00. Little Whistle the guinea pig lived in the back of the toystore. When the store closed he'd leave his cage and the adventures would begin. The toys eventually would be bought and leave the store but Little Whistle was content to live there, waiting for the night and the fun.

📖 ***Milo's Hat Trick*** by Jon Agee; Michael di Capua Books (Hyperion); New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.95. Milo wasn't much of a magician until he found a bear that could hide in Milo's hat. Both the bear and Milo have adventures but at the end, Milo learns how to disappear into his own hat! A clever and charming story.

📖 ***What Do You See When You Shut Your Eyes?*** by Cynthia Zarin; illustrated by Sarah Durham; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 1998; Hardcover $15.00. This is a kind of minibook filled with possibilities. What do you see when you shut your eyes? Peer around the door? When you listen hard? And more. A good way to start helping children think about what's in their world.

📖 ***The Great Show-and-Tell Disaster*** by Mike Reiss; illustrated by Mike Cressy; Price Stern Sloan (a division of Penguin Putnam Books); New York; 2001; Hardcover $13.99. Ned has to bring something to Show and Tell, but what? In desperation he glues together the odds and ends from his room to create a Mix-Up Ray. Now Ned becomes a menace turning PEAS into APES, and even poor CATHY into a YACHT. Will he ever put things right? In this clever and quirky story, told in rhyme, there is a happy ending.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

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En Español

Volume 17 Number 1 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | January - 2002

Juegos Imaginarios

"Hagamos una casa para el perro".
"Pero si yo no tengo perro. ¿Puede dormir mi gato ahí"?
"Claro, tu puedes ser el gato y yo el perro".

Dos amigos están jugando juntos con grades bloques de madera en el jardín infantil. Están proyectando una estructura y están negociando los términos del juego imaginario. Los observo a medida que ponen cuidadosamente un bloque sobre otro. Están cooperando, cada uno esperando su turno para poner un bloque sobre el otro y riéndose mucho cada vez que un bloque se cae. También están discutiendo la comida que comerán los animales, todo con mucho aspaviento y haciendo mucho ruido.

Estos niños se están divirtiendo haciendo lo que parece ser natural para la mayoría de los niños: están jugando juegos imaginarios. Evidentemente, son buenos jugadores y necesitan muy poca ayuda en la planificación de su aventura. Hay muchos niños que no juegan con tanta imaginación y con tan poco esfuerzo como estos dos. Sin embargo, con la ayuda de los padres y los maestros, todos los niños pueden aprender.

Los Ingredientes Para los Juegos Imaginarios

Después de 30 años de investigación sobre juegos, me queda claro que hay ciertos ingredientes básicos que ayudan a fomentar juegos más imaginativos.

Tiene que haber una persona que permite el juego, que acepta las absurdas travesuras de un niño y que no emite ningún juicio, incluso cuando los juegos se toman ridículos o simplemente estúpidos.

Debe haber un espacio para jugar. Este puede ser un rincón de una habitación o un espacio en una mesa. Este "espacio sagrado" es importante para el niño. Si ella quiere dejar una estructura armada de un día para otro, el padre o el maestro debe permitirlo cuando sea razonable. ¡Que felicidad es encontrar intacto tu fuerte o castillo el próximo día!

Debe haber tiempo para jugar. En estos tiempos los niños están tan llenos de actividades estructuradas y con obligaciones, o largas horas en la pre-escuela, que nos olvidamos que necesitan tiempo en el hogar para jugar o simplemente soñar y gozar de estar con uno de sus padres o amigos, conversando o compartiendo un cuento.

Finalmente, los niños necesitan tener algunos accesorios sencillos o juguetes sin estructura (por ejemplo, bloques, LEGO, ropa para disfrazarse, vehículos y miniaturas de gente, muñecas, cintas de música, y libros).

Es interesante notar que 75% de los juguetes que estarán a la venta en los Estados Unidos durante la próxima navidad tendrán un "chip" de computadora. Uno solo puede imaginarse que efecto tendrán en los niños estos juguetes electrónicos en sus habilidades lingüísticas, imaginación, y su habilidad de convertirse en pensadores diferentes si los juguetes están programados para ofrecerles palabras y frases específicas.

Etapas del Juego

Cuando se examina los juegos de los niños, es útil mirarlo a través de la perspectiva de un enfoque de etapas, reconociendo que el juego tiene distintos objetivos en distintas edades.

Jean Piaget, el sicólogo suizo, divide el juego en tres periodos principales: el juego de imitación y práctica; el juego simbólico, lo que nosotros generalmente llamamos juegos imaginarios; y los juegos con reglas, como los juegos de tablero y otros juegos comunes de niños.

Imitación

La imitación, la forma más temprana de juego, empieza al nacimiento y llega hasta alrededor de los 24 meses. El bebé copia los sonidos y acciones de la gente y de los animales en su entorno, como la palabra "adiós" o una despedida con la mano. Estas acciones, generalmente reforzadas con las sonrisas de aprobación entusiasta de un adulto, son pura imitación sin una real comprensión de lo que significan. Un niño chico puede tomar un teléfono y decir "hasta luego" o despedirse con la mano a álguien que entra a la habitación. Solo después, cuando el niño pasa a la etapa de juego simbólico, las palabras y los movimientos motores calzan apropiadamente.

El juego práctico lleva a formar habilidades motores. Cuando los bebés en sus cunas intentan pegarle a los móviles para hacer que se
muevan, o los niños chicos apilan bloques o cubos, ponen palillos de
plástico en frascos o garrapatean con gruesos lápices de cera están desarrollando las habilidades motores finas y gruesas.

Juego Simbólico

El juego simbólico, o imaginario, emerge alrededor de los dos años. ¿Qué es el juego simbólico? Puede ser una actividad conocida llevada a cabo en una situación distinta pero sin el equipo o las herramientas apropiadas. Lavar una muñeca en una tina imaginaria es un buen ejemplo. Puede ser algo que es sencillamente ilógico e imposible --piratas que se escapan navegando después que su barco se hunde. Tratar a objetos inermes como si fueran reales --tratar de alimentar un oso peluche- es otro ejemplo. Y por supuesto, el niño que pretende que está haciendo un trabajo de adulto tal como repartir las cartas o ser un astronauta.

En esta etapa, de la edad de dos a siete, los niños son egocéntricos y creen que lo que sienten y piensan también es experimentado por las personas en su entorno. Hasta que aprenden lo contrario, también creen que todo lo que se mueve está vivo, como las hojas que se mueven con el viento o una vela encendida. Tienden a ver causa y efecto donde no existe una relación: por ejemplo que el pito de un tren es la causa de su movimiento. Ya que el niño piensa ilógicamente, desde el punto de vista de los adultos, sentarse y conversarles a los niños y compenetrarse de su mundo
le ofrece a los adultos una mirada encantadora e intrigante del funcionamiento interior de sus mentes.

El periodo clave para el juego imaginativo, o lo que yo llamo la "plena temporada del juego" es entre las edades de tres y cinco años, cuando los niños están completamente involucrados con el juego simbólico y la sustitución de objetos por los artefactos reales. Un bloque de madera puede convertirse en un ladrillo de una casa, o incluso un teléfono si uno necesita llamar al "doctor" para que atienda a una muñeca enferma. Una caja vacía grande se puede convertir en submarino, en nave espacial, o en un barco pirata. En verdad, los niños son muy inventivos.

El juego inventado empieza con el niño como el único actor pero crece paulatinamente hasta que incluye un reparto completo de otros niños. Una niña alimenta una muñeca, pero la niña está activa mientras que la muñeca permanece pasiva. Poco a poco, la muñeca se pone más activa: caminando, conversando, alimentando a otra muñeca o a la "mami".

Los niños también pasan de juegos imaginarios solitarios a los juegos sociales, donde interactúan con otros niños y adoptan varios roles. Al comienzo, un niño chico jugará solo -- empujará un camión en el suelo, imitará un gato o perro, gateando por el suelo o mecerá una muñeca en su cuna. Los niños chicos incluso pueden jugar juntos pero su enfoque esencial seguirá siendo su propio juego.

Alrededor de los tres años empieza el juego imaginario social cooperativo. Al principio, los niños puede que hagan turnos y compartan durante sus juegos, y se involucren en juegos sencillos, como jugar a las escondidas. Pero no desarrollan los guiones imaginativos de doctor-paciente, o padre-niño. No adoptan distintos roles, cambian
voces, o actúan un cuento.

Estos situaciones mas compléjas empiezan a surgir alrededor de las edades de cuatro a seis años. Eventualmente otros niños son atraídos a jugar otros roles y, en algunos casos, hasta que se junta un reparto completo de actores.

Juegos con Reglas

El desarrollo de los juegos con reglas es la última etapa en la teoría del juego de Piaget. Alrededor de los siete años los niños empiezan a alejarse de los juegos inventados y se involucran en los juegos establecidos en reglas. Algunos, como "el monito ciego" y la rayuela son institucionales, habiendo sido pasados de una generación a otra con cambios mínimos. Los niños aprenden estos juegos ya sea por instrucción directa de niños mayores o a través de la observación e imitación.

Los Beneficios del Juego

El juego es bueno para nosotros --para los niños y los adultos. Los niños ejercitan movimientos

motores finos cuando juegan con rompecabezas o con figuras de miniatura. Los chicos practican las habilidades motores al escalar, andar en triciclo, brincar, correr y saltar. Aumentan su vocabulario, adquiriendo muchas palabras distintas y mejoran su lenguaje expresivo cuando se involucran en juegos inventados. Si un niño está jugando al "restaurante", un padre o un maestro puede definir las palabras *menú, mesero,* y *cuenta.* Al jugar juegos imaginarios los niños aprenden secuencias, a pensar lógicamente y aprenden el orden correcto de las cosas. Los niños comparten y esperan su turno, y cooperan cuando juegan juegos imaginarios. Los niños también aprenden a ser flexibles. Si no tienen un avión de juguete cualquier palo largo puede servir de sustituto.

El control de conductas impulsivas y la postergación de la gratificación son algunos de los principales beneficios de los juegos imaginarios. Le enseña a los niños paciencia y a tener una actitud de aceptar una cosa a la vez. Un chico no puede gozar de la hora del té hasta que hierva el agua, estén hechas las galletas de greda, y la mesa esté puesta. Si un niño se pone agresivos y le trata de pegar a otro niño, le profesora rápidamente retirará al chico fastidioso. Por lo tanto, los niños aprenden a frenar sus impulsos negativos y a expresar su ira a través de las palabras. Es mucho más entretenido ser parte de un guión inventado que estar sentado en la platea.

En algunas formas de juegos imaginativos los niños pueden descifrar sus sentimientos. Si la madre ha reprochado a un niño, es bastante común ver a un niño regañando a su muñeca. Si un niño está celoso sobre la llegada de un nuevo bebé, el niño puede representar sentimientos de rabia, celos, y más adelante aceptación de su rival a través de juegos con títeres. Y finalmente, jugar es sencillamente entretenido. Los niños que son buenos jugadores imaginarios tienen sentimientos más positivos, y sonríen y se ríen más que los niños que no juegan juegos inventados.

El juego es una parte importante de la vida de un preescolar y no debiera parar a medida que el niño crece. Las formas más tempranas del juego se integran a las formas posteriores. El juego sensorial del bebé puede encontrarse en el gozo de un adulto de echarse arena entre los dedos de los pies o de las jugarretas en la piscina. Los juegos de habilidad y los juegos con reglas se evidencian cuando el adulto perfecciona una jugada de golf o estudia una nueva movida de ajedrez. El juego simbólico o imaginario está manifestado en las obras teatrales de aficionados, en los desfiles de disfraces, al escribir poesía o prosa, y en sencillamente soñar con los ojos abiertos.

El Juego y el Aprendizaje

Para empezar, trate de ponerse en contacto con su propio espíritu de ser juguetón. Recuerde los juegos que jugaba cuando era joven. Observe a sus niños jugando y vea qué los deleita. Cuando se frustran o se estancan en un juego imaginario, Ud. les puede plantear un par de ideas para mantener el juego o convertirse en el iniciador de un juego nuevo.

Su apoyo y estimulación ayudan a alentar a involucrar a los niños en la fantasía, imaginación, y juegos imaginarios. Permítale a sus niños a dirigir el juego una vez que empieza. Leerle a su niño (ya sea poesía, cuentos de hadas o cuentos común y corrientes) o escuchar canciones juntos puede estimular ideas para un juego inventado. Por ejemplo, su chica puede optar por hacer el papel de uno de los personajes.

Accesorios sencillos como títeres, muñecas, personas y animales en miniatura, cajas grandes, bloques, disfraces y objetos caseros, como platos y cucharas de plástico, son útiles para los juegos inventados. Una sábana vieja sobre una mesa sirve de una buena carpa para escondites para un juego de piratas o de cómodo "refugio". Un desfile de juguetes puede ser entretenido y se puede marchar con música producida por ollas y cucharas de palo y un cascabel hecho de dos platos de papel pegados con corchetes y llenos de frijoles y cabritas de maíz. Una caja grande lo puede llevar en un viaje al espacio, en un viaje en avión, o en un viaje al zoológico. He aquí una oportunidad para un padre de señalarle todos los puntos importantes en el camino a medida que el niño hace ruidos de motor e imita los animales que ve.

Jugar con los niños pude ser una aventura para los padres y para los niños. Abrirá el mundo para los niños y al mismo tiempo alienta la imaginación y la creatividad. De hecho, investigaciones han demostrado que los niños que usan juegos imaginarios cuando son chicos mantendrán su espíritu creativo y seguirán siendo pensadores originales a medida que crecen.

Dorothy Singer, Ed.D. es Jefe de Investigaciones Científicas en la Facultad de Sicología de la Universidad de Yale. También es autora (con Jerome Singer, Ph.D) de Make Believe: Games and Activities for Imaginative Play, Washington DC: Magination Press, 2001. También han escrito The House of Make-Believe. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Juegos

Los juegos imaginarios alientan el crecimiento cognitivo, emocional y social. Jerome Singer y yo hemos estado involucrados en un proyecto centrado en los padres, las personas que trabajan en hogares, personal de centros Head Start y jardines infantiles, para enseñarles a los niños juegos inventados específicos que fomenten las habilidades que los niños

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necesitan en kindergarten. La idea que guía nuestro proyecto es que los profesores y padres pueden enseñar exitosamente vocabulario, colores, formas, números, modales, y conocimientos sobre eventos cotidianos a través del juego, en ves de a través de la educación formal.

Le dimos pruebas a los niños que median estos tipos de conocimientos y habilidades antes y después del adiestramiento. Descubrimos que los niños que jugaban estos juegos imaginarios específicos tenían puntajes significativamente más altos en estas pruebas que los niños que no habían tenido esta capacitación.

He aquí algunas de las actividades que usamos con los padres y maestros.

El Juego de Restaurante

Este juego recrea la experiencia de establecer e ir a un restaurante. Ud. seguramente no se ha dado cuenta cuantas cosas están involucradas y cuantas cosas se pueden aprender. A continuación se describe como hacerlo paso a paso.

Imagínese que Ud. y sus niños van a un restaurante a celebrar un cumpleaños. Invéntele un nombre al restaurante. Decida quien va a ser el mesero y quien será el cumpleañero.

Disponga una mesa y sillas --una para cada niño (u oso peluche) que se sentarán en la mesa. Ayude a su niño decorar mantelitos individuales haciendo círculos, cuadrados y triángulos. Ponga la mesa usando platos de papel y cubiertos. Usando greda de color o "play dough" haga una torta y use escarbadientes como velas. Tenga papel y lápices listos para una libreta de pedidos. Fabrique dinero. Haga un menú imaginario y decórelo. No es necesario escribirlo de verdad.

A medida que los niños ponen la mesa, cuente los mantelitos y cubiertos. Más tarde, cuente las velas y cuando sea hora de pagar la cuenta cuente el dinero de fantasía.

Haga una llamada imaginaria al restaurante y diga cuanta gente va ir. Una vez que haya llegado, el mesero toma su pedido y lo anota en su cuaderno. Los niños pueden inventar la comida que quieren pedir. El mesero trae la comida. Puede que se diga "gracias" y "de nada" muchas veces cuando se estén sentando y cuando se hace el pedido de la comida.

Al final de la comida, el mesero trae la torta de cumpleaños y se pide un deseo. El niño cuenta las velas y las sopla. El mesero dice "con permiso" y levanta la mesa. Él trae la cuenta. Usando dinero imaginario, el niño cuenta la cantidad en voz alta. El mesero dice "gracias" y termina el juego.

El Juego del Submarino

Este juego se trata sobre valientes exploradores que van a ir al fondo del mar a encontrar un tesoro perdido. Lo único que se necesita para hacer submarinos son cajas. Si no tiene cajas use cojines.

Los niños pueden decorar las cajas y aprender los nombres de los colores a medida que los usan. Pueden hacer un mapa de fondo del mar y poner una "X" donde está el tesoro. Los niños se meten a la caja o se sientan en los cojines y cuentan hasta diez por mientras descendemos. Déjelos hacer harto ruido a medida que bajan al fondo del mar. Cuando todos llegamos al fondo del océano nos ponemos trajes especiales para mantenernos secos y damos aire para respirar. Buscamos el tesoro usando el mapa. Vemos peces de color y nombramos el tipo y sus colores. Finalmente, vemos el baúl del tesoro. A medida que los niños lo abren y ven el tesoro nombran los colores y las formas de las joyas. Vemos joyas redondas, cuadradas y triangulares. Finalmente, ponemos el baúl en la caja y ascendemos contando hasta diez.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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www.northshorechildguidance.org
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
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Volume 17, Number 2 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* February - 2002

Raising Children With Special Needs

When Betsy was born her mother knew right away something was wrong. Instead of being pink and rosy Betsy was grey. She didn't suck right on her bottle and two weeks after she came home from the hospital she stopped breathing. The doctors did test after test. Everyone knew something was wrong, but no one could figure out what it was.

Ryan was born with physical problems – a cleft palate, club feet, scoliosis of the spine, and a small jaw with receding chin.

Catherine was born with spina bifida, a condition in which the spinal cord doesn't grow and close up properly.

Nobody's perfect. Some children's difficulties are evident earlier and are more serious. They create turmoil and require change and adaptation in the family. Even if they aren't born with problems, almost all children, sooner or later, need a helping hand. Speech therapy, medical interventions, physical therapy, assistance with emotional issues. This can create turmoil and upheaval as families learn to cope with the difficulties and support their youngsters' development.

IPS 0380

Surviving

When parents first learn their child is going to need special medical, educational, or therapeutic interventions they feel overwhelmed. This is new and frightening. It feels like the bottom has fallen out of the world and parents struggle just to survive.

You may have to make decisions without feeling informed or confident. Specialists may provide a flood of information that makes little or no sense. How could it? You didn't think you needed to know about treatments and interventions. Now, suddenly you have to be an expert.

Services your child needs may not be readily available, and family members and friends may not be supportive. Just getting through the day may take all your energy.

Your Reactions are Normal

They are also temporary. These feelings may be around longer than you'd like, but most will resolve or fade as you begin to take control of your life.

You might have uncomfortable reactions to the fact that your child has special needs. You might feel angry that this happened, ashamed that your baby is less than perfect, and then angry at your reaction.

At first you may feel shock – everything seems unreal. Then comes grief. You may grieve for what you had hoped and for what your child may not be able to experience. You've lost

the dream for your child's future.

The uncertainty and emotional upheaval is exhausting and stressful. You may have physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, loss of appetite and decreased sexual interest. You may not be able to sleep. Above all you may feel weak, vulnerable and helpless. All of this is normal and will ease with time and with your developing sense of competence and control.

What To Do

Make time to grieve and to heal. If you don't take care of yourself you won't be able to take care of your child. Make time to be with your partner and nurture that relationship. If you have other children, they need your attention too, and you need to be able to spend time with them.

Remember to exercise, eat nutritious meals, and get enough sleep. You also need to simply enjoy yourself. It will help you maintain your sense of emotional balance.

Use your supports. Don't shut people out of your life. If they want to help you, let them. Consider joining a support group. This isn't for everyone, but many parents find it helpful to connect with other parents in similar circumstances.

Take care of one problem at a time. Tackle the biggest and most important one first. Sometimes that also takes care of several smaller issues. "You don't have to vanquish every single challenge," says Betsy's mother Susie.

Some people occasionally use a form of **chosen denial**, taking a break from coping with a problem. "You always know it's there," says Catherine's mother Diane. "Sometimes you just have to take a break from it."

Denial is very useful, but be selective. You can give yourself a break, but know that it is a brief vacation and you do have to return to reality.

Turning from Surviving to Searching

At some point you'll notice your reactions have begun to change. You're tired of just going from one problem to another. You want some goals, and a plan. You feel that you now have the energy to cope and realize that what ever problems you face, the world did not end. It's time to become assertive.

Susie: Six weeks after Betsy was born the relatives were visiting. I was serving coffee and cake and holding our daughter up and serving more coffee, and the whole time I was dying a death inside. My aunt, a little teeny woman 80 some years old, came up to me and said,"My dear, this too shall pass." That was one of the most important things ever said to me. At that moment I knew that things may not be okay, but they would be different. And that part I could control.

Searching

The second stage of adaptation is Searching. You may be looking for answers about your child's problems, or seeking to understand what your child's problems will mean for your own life.

Gaining Knowledge

Part of searching is facing problems squarely and becoming an advocate for your youngster. For some parents this means scouring medical journals for answers, or exceptions; for treatments and tests; or just keeping up with the field. It can also mean joining organizations and parent groups and attending conferences.

Ryan was a year old. He had been gavage fed (through a feeding tube) at the hospital but his mother had a hard time doing it at home and the parade of home-visiting nurses couldn't seem to help her. His mother worried that he wasn't getting enough nutrition, but her fears were dismissed by the professionals. "When I took him to the ear, nose, and throat doctors, they were so concerned with his neck and head and ears, they said, 'don't worry. He's just skinny.' They couldn't see the whole child; they couldn't see that he was starving."

Another mother, seeing Ryan's condition, helped Janet gain the confidence she needed to become her son's advocate. "Oh, my God, your child is dying from malnutrition," she said. Her advice was simple, but powerful. "Stomp your feet. Have a tantrum. Tell them you're not leaving the hospital until they do something." Janet took the advice and demanded a gastrostomy to introduce the food directly into Ryan's stomach so he would finally have enough to eat. Ryan gained five pounds in five weeks and a month later he began to walk.

Things may not always go smoothly. Your child may not improve as much as you expect or want. She may hate going to the therapist, lack the ability to participate in an activity, or have an unpredictable medical crisis. One specialist may say one thing, and another, equally expert, may tell you something different. Sometimes you just feel exhausted. You're tired of calling for appointments, starting a new program, facing a new difficulty, making another decision.

But each time you find a needed service, or an answer to your question, you gain confidence. You've been able to do something for your youngster.

What to do

Remember that your role as the parent makes you a professional. You are the person who sees your child as a whole individual not just a youngster with a spinal problem, or cognitive difficulties, or developmental delays. If you have concerns about the nature or number of interventions your child is receiving, talk to some

of the other professionals who know your child and your situation.

Inner Searching

Along with your search for answers for your child, you may also find yourself on an inner quest. Your life is going to be different from the one you planned and anticipated. You have to find a new identity, and only part of it will be as the parent of a child with special needs.

Susie: One morning I looked around me. Betsy was on the kitchen counter in her infant seat, staring straight ahead, busy being not normal. The house was in shambles and the sun wasn't shining. I looked in the mirror and nothing terrific stared back. I needed to be at home for Betsy, but I needed to begin living again. I wanted things to be different and realized I would have to make them different.

• Your child's disability may always be there but the emotional urgency and intensity around it lessens, and the meaning of the disability changes for you. In the beginning you saw your child's diagnosis or disability and the single most important factor determining your child's future happiness. But you may come to see that your child is a total person who needs a strong sense of self-esteem, persistence, optimism and support to grow to achieve her capacity.

Turning Points from Searching to Settling In

At some point you realize that the solution you have now reached won't last forever, but while it holds you can enjoy the stability.

You also realize that some of your questions don't have answers and you slowly get used to living with ambiguity and uncertainty. But then, life is often unpredictable for parents in general.

Settling In

Settling In is seeing the world for what it is. It is moving beyond the intense emotions and gaining a greater sense of control and balance in your daily life.

It's a shift in attitude. It may not correspond to your neighbor's definition but for you and your family what's normal has changed. Your new normal may include a lot of keeping appointments, daily management of medications or equipment, endless insurance forms, special programs to call about and investigate but you don't feel quite as much urgency.

You also begin to realize that interventions take time and that you aren't going to see instant results. There will be advances and maybe even regressions. You don't have to spend every available minute working with your youngster.

You probably still worry, but you are learning that worrying wastes energy, and upsets you.

Janet: We build up so many things – like, "What if he had to go to a new school?" But then when they come, you just go through them. You need to get information and be practical, but worrying sure won't make it any easier.

Even your perspective on your child's needs change. Adaptive equipment isn't a symbol of a disability. Rather they are aids towards more independent functioning. You can also see that while you deal with your child's problems, you don't dwell on them. You wonder if your son is having fun rather than worry if he's learning something from the activity.

What To Do

Move ahead with your own life. Everything is temporarily under control and you can appreciate the respite for as long as it lasts. After coming through several crises you can say that you know something is coming but you can handle it. And the next one after that too.

Life Isn't a Straight Path

You might not be able to move smoothly along. In fact, setbacks will occur. A new crisis will provoke searching, financial problems will cause additional stress. Your marriage, friendships with others, even family support may change. All of these will bring Surviving and Searching feelings back into the foreground. But it also means that searching and surviving are temporary states. Settling in returns.

Diane: We're all doing better than we used to. The difficult times are shorter. It used to last a week, and now it's moments.

And the reason is because you have the coping skills, knowledge and resources to deal with setbacks.

Most preschoolers need extra attention and help at some time in their preschool careers. Some children need more help, or need help for a longer period of time, than others. Some dive right in and never look back. Others wade in slowly, unsure about letting go of their secure links to toddlerhood. Some kids have a hard time understanding

sharing and taking turns. Some are clumsy, or aggressive. Others have trouble remembering the rules. Some kids need a lot of individual teacher attention; others are independent and self-motivated.

All children have good days and not-so-good day, tired days, happy days, and grumpy days. Children with special needs are often atypical simply in matters of degree.

Adapted with permission from Nobody's Perfect: Living and growing with children who have special needs by Nancy B. Miller, Ph.D., M.S.W. published by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland. Phone: 1 800-638-3775, Internet:www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/miller-143x

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Siblings of Children with Disabilities

*An interview with **Elizabeth Goulding-Tag, CSW**, Coordinator of the Family Support Program for children with developmental disabilities and their families at The Marks Family Right From The Start 0-3 Center of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.*

Q: What is it like for children who have a sibling with special needs?

It's very anxiety-provoking. They know their siblings are different, not like their friends' brothers and sisters. They wish they could have the kind of relationship other children have and that everyone could participate in the same family activities. But they also care deeply about their special-needs siblings. Regardless of the age, the typically developing children act like mini-parents. They observe their parents taking care of their siblings and learn to take a nurturing role, watching out for their sisters and brothers.

Q: What about sibling rivalry? Does it exist in these families?

Definitely, and the rivalry can be even more intense. By the nature of the disability these siblings require more attention and individualized attention than the typical siblings.

When a special-needs child achieves something it's a big deal but when a typical child does the same thing parents may barely notice. And children keep track. They are very aware of how much and what kind of attention their siblings are getting. The typical children often wish they received that attention. So, the rivalry can be more pronounced because the issues are more intense.

Q: What do typical siblings do when they feel this rivalry?

The families have the same issues, but everything is intensified. Much like other children they may act out, become disobedient and defiant. Then, the parents have their own issues - depression, strained marriages, financial concerns which exist independent of having a special needs child. Parents also grapple with difficult feelings which influence how they respond to their children.

Q: As odd as it sounds, can this can be a positive experience for the typical siblings?

It's not easy, but it can be a positive experience. The behavior of the special-needs child can be embarrassing to the typically developing child. The child with a developmental disability, or emotional problems may bolt from the house and run to a friend or neighbor. Now, the sibling has to help get the child back home. Or facial or vocal tics (i.e. grunts) that happen in public embarrass typical siblings. But the positive side is that these children develop some really good coping skills. They learn to shut out the reactions of others and to accept their siblings' behaviors as something that they can't control – and to love their brothers and sisters anyway.

Q: What can parents do?

Because the needs of typical siblings often get lost in the process of raising a child with disabilities parents need to give the typical child special one-on-one attention. It doesn't have to be expensive. A Saturday morning breakfast out at a deli or fast food restaurant with one parent while another parent or family member stays home to watch the other siblings. A walk through the mall and an ice-cream, or even time together at the playground can satisfy a child's need to feel special and be the focus of a parent's attention.

Typical kids also need to have their own toys and their own space. Not everyone can have their own room but they can have their own place within a room – a locked box, or locker with a key, somewhere they can call their own.

Don't hold your typical children within the limitations of the child with special needs. You can find activities like a sports team, cub scouts, or social activities where the typical children can feel good about their accomplishments and express their individuality.

Typical siblings can also benefit from support groups. It gives them a chance to vent, to talk freely without feeling they are disloyal, or that their parents won't approve of what they say. Hearing the experiences of other children can make them feel less alone and isolated.

Q: What can child-care workers or preschool teachers do to help the typical siblings?

These children need to be recognized as individuals with their own skills, abilities, and needs. Child-care providers and teachers can create a place where children aren't expected to be mini-mommies or mini-daddies, but can just be kids.

Self-esteem can be a problem for these children when they see their siblings being rewarded and applauded for achievements that are routinely achieved in the typical child. Typical siblings can use a lot of reassurance and affirmation of their self-worth. Sincere appreciation and compliments for their abilities help them feel good about themselves and their accomplishments.

Dear Reader

Someone once said we can't change the cards we're dealt, but we can always decide how we want to play them.

I'm reminded of this when I'm not happy about a particular hand of cards. How do I want to play them? How can I learn to change what I can and accept what I can't?

This month Nancy Miller, Ph.D., M.S.W, looks at living with special needs children. Together with a group of mothers who have "been there, done that" she distills the wisdom, knowledge and experiences into a book, and now into this article that takes readers through the stages of coping with children with disabilities. It's not just for the families, it's for everyone.

Children with sisters and brothers who have special needs face particular challenges. It's hard enough to negotiate sibling relationships, this makes it even more complicated. So, we talked to Elizabeth Goulding-Tag, C.S.W who is the coordinator of the Family Support Program for children with developmental disabilities and their families. Everyone will find this interview invaluable.

Of course, we have our Library Resources, and Dawn Barhyte's crafts, including some we think will be a hit with special needs youngsters.

February 14th is Valentine's Day. Let's hug the people we love, and start with our kids.

Heide Schwartzberg

THE PLAYDATE:

Something Special for WINTER

It's winter and the dark days of the year seem to close in tightly on kids. This might be an ideal time to arrange playdates for children. Playdates usually begin when your child has started preschool but, for kids who don't attend preschool, parents can arrange playdates in connection with their own social calendar. If you are friends with a couple who have children around the same age as yours, you can arrange for practice playdates when you are getting together for an afternoon of socializing.

If you are arranging a playdate with one of your child's classmates, here are some things to consider:

- Don't leave your child in a household with which you are not familiar. Take plenty of time getting to know the other parent before you even consider a playdate. Think about how this parent might interact with your child. Does the parent seem to be calm and fair? Do you feel as though you can trust this parent? Have you observed any behavior on the part of this parent with which you disagree? Is the house a safe place (e.g. does this family keep guns in their home?)

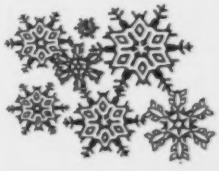
- Talk about how your child should behave in another child's home. Manners are not out of style and parents need to be sure that their children know that "please" and "thank you" are basic and important. They need to be told that they must follow the rules of the house. Parents need to teach children how to address their friends parents such as "Mrs. Smith" or "Mr. Smith." When children know the rules they are more confident and comfortable on their own.

- Should you stay during a play date? Most people think that it is not appropriate for the visiting mother to stay during a playdate unless that was planned in advance. If someone other than a parent is caring for a child, playdates and protocols need to be decided upon and the hosting parent needs to be part of the plan. Remember if a parent or caregiver is going to stay during the playdate, your child needs to know this in advance. If they think that they are going to be on their own, and suddenly their parent doesn't leave, a child may feel that their parent didn't trust them or believe that they were capable of being on their own.

- Playdates for preschoolers shouldn't last more than two hours. After that, young kids just get too tired and excited to sustain the encounter. Hosting parents should not be expected to feed the visiting child because special dietary considerations, food allergies, and other issues cannot be known or anticipated. These considerations should be discussed and planned for in advance.

- After a playdate, de-brief your children. Talk about the experience and find out if it was comfortable. Ask questions and be specific. If your child exhibits behavior that is different from his usual behavior, don't be afraid to question it. Ask why he did that and what he was thinking.

- What happens next? Don't be frustrated if the playdate doesn't work out. You can try again with a different friend or wait awhile until your child feels ready to try again. Listen to your instincts and just relax. Follow your child's lead. When he's ready, things will fall into place and, if not, than playdates may just not be the ideal way for your child to socialize.



Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Celebrating Our Multi-Cultural World

📖 ***Caribbean Dream*** by Rachel Isadora; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 1998; Hardcover; $15.99. Evocative watercolor illustrations and simple but lyrical text combine to make this a book fun to look at and beautiful to read. "Where rain meets earth, we splash." Ending with "Where darkness meets light, we dream."

📖 ***The Crane Wife*** retold by Odds Bodkin; illustrated by Gennady Spirin; Voyager Books (and imprint of Harcourt, Inc.); San Diego, CA; 2001; Softcover $6.00. In this fable the lonely sail-maker Osamu never thought he would be able to find a wife. He was too poor and barely had enough to feed himself. But his kindness to an injured crane is rewarded when a shivering young woman, Yukiko comes to live with him as his wife. Unfortunately he becomes greedy and it costs him the happiness and love of that woman.

📖 ***The Earth Under Sky Bear's Feet - Native American poems of the land*** by Joseph Bruchac; illustrated by Thomas Locker; PaperStar books; New York; 1998; Softcover $5.99. The poems of Native American tribes richly illustrated celebrate the night under the watchful eyes of Sky Bear.

📖 ***Ernie Dances to the Didgeridoo*** by Alison Lester; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 2000; Hardcover $15.00. Ernie is going to live in Australia for a year, in the area known as Arnhem Land among the Aboriginal people who live there. Life is very different there with different seasons and activities. A nice friendly introduction to what it's like to live in a foreign world.

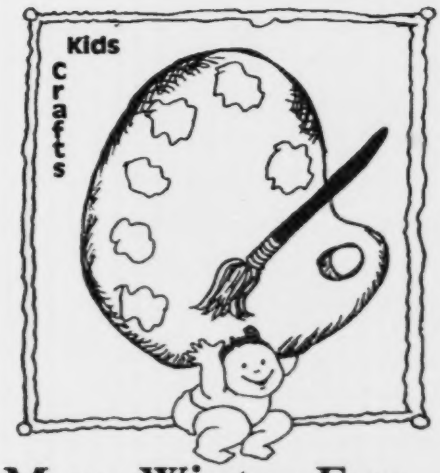
📖 ***I Love My Hair*** by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley; illustrated by E. B. Lewis; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 1998; Softcover, $5.95. Keyana finds it's hard to get through the tangles but she can also do so many things with her hair: from corn-rowing to a globe of hair Afro style, to her favorite: two ponytails, one on each side of her head.

📖 ***The Polar Bear Son, an Inuit tale*** retold and illustrated by Lydia Dabcovich; Clarion Books; New York; 1997; Softcover $5.95. Way up north lived an old woman who had a hard time providing food for herself until she finds and adopts an orphan polar bear cub. Once the cub grows up to be a full-size bear the men in the village become jealous of the bear's superior ability to hunt. Although the woman sends the bear away to save it, the bear still hunts and helps feed the old woman.

📖 ***In Search of the Spirit: The Living National Treasures of Japan*** by Sheila Hamanaka and Ayano Ohmi; Morrow Junior Books (William Morrow); New York; 1999; Hardcover $16.00. The Living National Treasures of Japan are artisans who were given grants to practice their arts and train others. They include a yuzen dyer (creating beautiful designs on silk kimonos) a bamboo weaver, puppet master, sword maker, noh actor, and a potter. Not only does each chapter describe the person and the skill there's also a "more about" section that takes the reader through the process step-by-step giving a deeper appreciation for the difficulty of the art involved.

📖 ***The Shabbat Box*** by Lesley Simpson; illustrated by Nicole in den Bosch; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc.; Rockville, MD; 2001; Softcover. Each Friday one of the children in school takes home the Shabbat Box that contains everything a family needs to celebrate the Shabbat. When it is Ira's turn he loses it in the snow storm. In its place he creates a new Shabbat Box. The book also includes directions for children to make their own Shabbat Box.

📖 ***Uno, Dos, Tres; One, Two, Three*** by Pat Mora; illustrated by Barbara Lavallee. A counting book in English and Spanish (up to ten) using doves, bells, pinatas and other beautiful decorations as two little children buy their mother birthday presents. The illustrations are enchanting and richly colorful.



More Winter Fun Coming Your Way

Cure the winter doldrums by nurturing your child's creative spirit and trying some of these hands-on crafts. Crafts are more than just an amusing way to pass the time. Children need the opportunity to play with materials and invent their original handiwork.

Work alongside your child and convey the joy of making things by following your child's lead. Take a journey into the magical world of creativity. It's bound to lead somewhere special.

❄ **Simple Snow Sculpture/Drawings**

You will need:
Foaming white shaving cream; White school glue; Dark colored paper; Paint brushes or Q-tips; Food coloring (optional).

If there is one thing kids can't resist it's sculpting. Begin by combining equal parts shaving cream and glue. Use the mixture as paint and let your child experiment. The whipped "paint" will dry puffy and hard and these 3-dimensional drawings can be enjoyed all year long. If your child desires colored "snow" add a few drops of food coloring to the mixture.

❄ **Jell-O Finger Paint Fun**

You will need:
Assorted Flavored Gelatin; Warm Water; White finger-paint paper.

This sensory project can be used for a child of any ability. Kids get to taste and smell, as well as see and touch the colors. In a small bowl mix the flavored gelatin with the warm water, a teaspoon at a time, until a paste has formed. Adjust the amount of water for the desired consistency. Make sure your child's hands are clean. Now, let your children have fun finger-painting (and tasting). Use a variety of flavors to make the colors of the rainbow. Give children an opportunity to talk about the beautiful spectrum of colors they are making, naming aloud as they go.

❄ **Effortless Paintings**

You will need:
White paper; Tempera paint in primary colors (red, yellow and blue).

This project will allow children to explore how colors change. First put small amounts of red, yellow and blue paint in the center of the white paper. Then have your child fold over the paper pressing firmly to make the colors blend and spread outwards. When your child opens the paper the primary colors will have been transformed before into secondary colors like orange, green and violet. When dry, these interesting designs can be cut out into shapes, exercising fine motor skills, and mounted on construction paper for a nice presentation.

❄ **Puzzle Art**

You will need:
Thin cardboard; Glue; Scissors; Favorite snapshot or magazine picture.

This puzzle is a sure way to put those little minds and fingers to work strengthening fine motor and perceptual skills. Begin by letting your child choose a favorite picture from a magazine, catalogue or even a family photograph. Now, carefully glue the picture onto the cardboard pressing firmly. Allow to dry thoroughly. The next step will require your assistance. Cut the mounted picture into pieces depending on your child's ability. Encourage your child to put the puzzle together and rediscover the favorite picture. To preserve this puzzle you can paint a thin layer of mod podge (available at craft stores) over the piece and let it dry overnight.

♥ *Valentine Variation:*

Cut a large heart out of red poster board. Ask your children what they would like their mystery valentine to say. Write it down in large block letters. Then follow the steps above. This would make a charming gift to someone special in your child's life.

❄ **The Giving Tree**

You will need:
Scraps of wrapping paper, construction paper, cards; Magic marker; Branch of a tree; White spray paint; Hole puncher; Red ribbon, yarn or string; Scissors; Flower pot or jar; Sand.

This activity has lots of "heart" and may even start a family tradition. First spray the branch with the white paint and put aside to dry. This will be placed in the sand in the container once dry. Then begin cutting out small hearts from the scraps of paper. Your child will need some assistance at this stage. Using the hole puncher either you or your child can put a hole in each heart. While working discuss how the heart is a symbol for affection and we give these as tokens of our love. Each family member makes promises (e.g. give a hug, draw a picture, or whatever each family member chooses) which you write on the hearts. Tie a ribbon and hang the hearts on your Giving Tree. Each day during Valentine's week, invite family members to pick a heart and read aloud.

Happy Winter Crafting!

Dawn Marie Barbyte

Library Resources

Special Books Special Needs

Books for Parents

📖 ***Help Your Doctor Help You with your Personal Medical Journal*** by Dianne C. Duffett; Random Inspirations Inc; Clarenville, Newfoundland; Canada; (www.randominspirations.com) 888-547-2389; Spiral bound, vinyl covered $12.95. Although it sounds like a book for adults, this is actually an excellent medical journal for parents of young children, whether or not they have a serious medical condition. The impetus for the book was the author's own experience with her son's medical emergency. The doctors needed to know about his medical history. Duffett had the information at hand because she had kept complete records. Of course, this journal doesn't replace the official records kept by doctors and hospitals but parents, usually at a moment's notice, also need to have information on allergies, medical conditions, insurance information, prescribed medications, previous and current illnesses and more.

📖 ***Your Chid Has a Disability: A complete sourcebook of daily and medical care*** by Mark L. Batshaw, MD; Paul Brookes Publishing Co.; Baltimore, MD; 1998; Softcover. Complete is a good word to describe this comprehensive look at the needs and experiences of children with disabilities and their family. Chapters contain discussions starting with Getting the Diagnosis, continue with Why My Child (with chapters on the causes of disabilities, genetic counseling for a possible next child), then several chapters on specific kinds of impairment: hearing, communication, autism, vision, and neuro-muscular disorders, moving on to approaches to treatment and finally growing up with a disability and what the future holds.

📖 ***Special Children Challenged Parents*** by Robert A. Naseef, Ph.D.; Paul Brookes Publishing Co.; Baltimore, MD; 2001; Softcover. Written by the father of a special needs child (Naseef's son Tariq has autism), this book is both a personal journey and a professional exploration of challenges facing parents of special needs children. Naseef meshes his own discoveries and growth with advice and information for others facing the same journey. Through anecdotes and stories readers can also identify with other families and realize they aren't isolated and alone in their struggles.

Books for Kids

📖 ***Ben Has Something to Say: A story about stuttering*** by Laurie Lears; illustrated by Karen Ritz; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2000; Hardcover. Ben stuttered and so he never talked in school. The only person he felt comfortable talking to was his father. And a junk-yard dog named Spike who was about to be sent to the pound. In the end, Ben talks to save Spike and learns that even though he didn't like to talk, sometimes he has something that's important enough to be said.

📖 ***Franklin Goes to the Hospital*** by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark; Scholastic Inc.; New York; 2000; Softcover, $4.50. Franklin is hurt playing soccer and needs to go to the hospital. He's never been in a hospital before and he's frightened by the whole thing. The book is very reassuring and takes the young reader through the experience of surgery and recovery. Although Franklin pretends to be brave, inside he's scared. The doctor tells him that just because he's afraid doesn't mean he isn't brave. "Being brave means doing what you have to do, no matter how scared you feel."

📖 ***Let's Talk About it: Extraordinary Friends*** by Fred Rogers; photographs by Jim Judkis; Puffin Books; New York; 2000; Softcover $6.99; Hardcover $15.99. A book about children with a disability and ways parents and children can talk about how people are alike and different. In his typical gentle manner Rogers talks about how children take their cues from adults and offers his advice and suggestions.

📖 ***Tibby Tried It*** by Sharon and Ernie Useman; illustrated by Cary Pillo; Magination Press (American Psychological Assoc.); Washington, DC; 1999; Hardcover. Tibby is a tree swallow who was born with a crooked wing and can't fly. With the help of others he discovers he can do other things. He can climb, and slide, and hop and even hide. The other birds laugh at him but when a baby bird who can't fly is in danger, it's Tibby who rescues it. Birds can do more than just fly.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

En Español

Volume 17 Number 2 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | February - 2002

Criando Niños con Necesidades Especiales

*Cuando nació Carolina su madre supo inmediatamente que algo estaba mal. En vez de estar rosadita, Carolina estaba gris. No chupaba bien su biberón y dos semanas después que llegó a la casa del hospital dejó de respirar. Los médicos hicieron examen tras examen. Todos sabían que algo andaba mal pero nadie sabía qué.

*Roberto nació con problemas físicos –paladar hendido, pie equino, escoliosis de la espina dorsal, y una mandíbula pequeña con mentón reducido.

*Catalina nació con espina bifida, una condición en que la espina dorsal no crece ni se cierra adecuadamente.

Nadie es perfecto. Las dificultades de algunos niños son evidentes tempranamente y son muy serias. Ellas crean confusión y requieren cambios y adaptación en la familia. Incluso si no nacen con problemas, casi todos los niños, tarde o temprano, necesitan una mano que los ayude. Fonoaudiología, intervenciones médicas, quinesioterapia, ayuda con problemas emocionales. Todo esto crea confusión y desconcierto a medida que las familias aprenden a enfrentar las dificultades y a apoyar el desarrollo de sus hijos.

Sobrevivir

Cuando los padres primero saben que su niño va a necesitar intervenciones médicas, educacionales, o terapéuticas se sienten abrumados. Todo esto es nuevo y aterrador. Pareciera que el mundo se les hubiese caído encima y los padres solo luchan por sobrevivir.

Quizás tenga que tomar decisiones sin sentirse informado o confiado. Los especialistas pueden entregarles una avalancha de información que tiene poco o nada de sentido. ¿Como podía tenerla? Ud. nunca pensó que tendría que saber sobre tratamientos e intervenciones. Ahora, de la noche a la mañana, uno tiene que convertirser en experto.

Los servicios que su niño necesita puede que no estén disponibles en todas partes,

y los miembros de la familia y los amigos quizás no la apoyen mucho. Quizás solo sobrevivir el día puede requerir de toda su fuerza.

Sus Reacciones Son Normales

Y también son pasajeras. Estos sentimientos pueden durar más tiempo de lo que uno quisiera pero la mayoría de ellos desaparecen o se resuelven a medida que o asume control sobre su vida.

Quizás tenga sentimientos encontrados con el hecho de que tu niño tiene necesidades especiales. Puedes sentirte enojada que esto te haya sucedido, avergonzada que tu bebé sea menos que perfecta, y después sentir rabia por tu propia reacción.

Tal vez al principio sientas conmoción --todo te parece

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irreal. Después viene el dolor. Puede que sufras por lo que habías esperado y por lo que tu niño nunca podrá experimentar. Has perdido los sueños del futuro de tu niño.
La incertidumbre y la conmoción emocional es agotante y causa estrés. Quizás experimentes síntomas físicos, como dolores de cabeza, de estómago, pérdida de apetito y pérdida de deseo sexual. Quizás no puedas dormir. Pero sobre todo te sientes débil, vulnerable e indefensa. Todo esto es normal y desaparecerá con el tiempo y cuando desarrolles una sensación de control y capacidad.

Qué Hacer

Hágase tiempo para enfrentar su dolor y para sanar. Si no te cuidas no podrás cuidar a tu niño. Hágase tiempo para estar con su pareja y desarrollar esa relación. Si tienes otros niños, ellos también necesitan de tu atención, y tu tienes que poder tener tiempo para ellos.

Recuerde hacer ejercicios, comer alimentos nutritivos, y dormir las horas necesarias. También tienes que poder gozar de la vida. Eso te ayudará a mantener un sentido de equilibrio emocional.

Utiliza tus fuentes de apoyos. No te aísles de la gente. Si álguien quiere ayudarte, déjalo. Considera participar en un grupo de apoyo mutuo. Esto no es para todo el mundo, pero muchos padres encuentran que es útil relacionarse con otros padres en circunstancias similares.

Enfrenta un problema a la vez. Enfrenta los más grande e importantes primero. A veces eso también resuelve los problemas menores. "Uno no tiene que superar cada desafió", dice Susana, la madre de Carolina.

Algunas personas a veces usan una forma de **negación parcial**, tomándose una pequeña pausa de el problema. "Uno siempre sabe que está ahí", dice Diana, la madre de Catalina. "Pero ocasionalmente uno tiene que hacer una pausa".

La negación es muy útil, pero sé selectivo. Puedes tomarte un descanso, pero tienes que saber que es una vacación breve y que tienes que volver a la realidad.

Pasando de Sobrevivir a la Búsqueda

En cierto momento notarás que tus reacciones han empezado a cambiar. Estás cansada de solamente correr de un problema a otro. Quieres tener metas, y un plan. Sientes que ahora tienes la energía para enfrentarlos y te das cuenta que no obstante todos los problemas que tienes el mundo no se acabó. Es el momento de ser asertiva.

Susana: Seis semanas después que nació Carolina vinieron algunos parientes de visita. Yo estaba sirviendo café y pasteles y tenía a mi hija en brazos y seguía sirviendo café, y todo el tiempo me estaba muriendo por dentro. Mi tía, una mujer pequeña de 80 años, se me acercó y me dijo, "Querida, esto también pasará". Esto fue una de las cosas más importantes que me han dicho en mi vida. En ese instante supe que las cosas quizás no estaban bien, pero que iban a ser distintas. Y esa parte yo la podía controlar.

Búsqueda

La segunda etapa de la adaptación es la Búsqueda. Puedes estar buscando respuestas sobre los problemas de tu niño, o tratando de comprender que significarán los problemas de tu hijo en tu vida.

Adquiriendo Conocimientos

Parte de la búsqueda es enfrentar los problemas directamente y convertirte en defensora de tu hijo. Para algunos padres esto significa intensas búsquedas de respuestas en las revistas médicos, o excepciones al caso; de tratamientos o exámenes; o simplemente estar al día con el tema. También puede significar convertirse en miembro de organizaciones o grupos de padres e ir a conferencias.

Roberto tenía un año. Lo estaban alimentando con una sonda (un tubo de alimentación que se introduce en la vena) en el hospital pero su madre había tenido dificultades haciéndolo en la casa y el desfile de enfermeras que venían a la casa no parecían ayudarla. Su madre estaba preocupada que él no estaba recibiendo suficiente alimentación pero sus temores eran ignorados por los profesionales. "Cuando lo llevé a los otorrinolaringólogos, ellos estaban tan preocupados con su cuello y cabeza y oídos, que dijeron 'No se preocupe. El sólo es flaco'. No podían ver el niño completo; no podían ver que estaba muriéndose de hambre".

Otra madre al ver la condición de Roberto, ayudó a Juanita a adquirir la confianza para convertirse en la defensora de su hijo. "Pero por Dios, si tu hijo se está muriendo de desnutrición", le dijo. Su consejo fue sencillo pero poderoso. "Grita y aúlla. Ten una pataleta. Diles que no te vas del hospital hasta que no hagan algo". Juanita aceptó el consejo e exigió una gastrotomía para introducir alimentos directamente al estomago de Roberto para que tuviera suficiente alimentación. Roberto aumentó dos kilos de peso en cinco semanas y un mes después empezó a caminar.

Las cosas no siempre funcionan tan bien. Su niño quizás no se mejore tan rápido como esperabas o querías. Quizás no le guste ir al terapeuta, o le falta la habilidad para participar en actividades, o quizás pueda tener una crisis médica imprevisible. Un especialista puede decir una cosa, y otro, igual de experto, le dice otra cosa distinta. A veces te sientes simplemente agotada. Estas aburrida de llamar pidiendo hora, empezando un nuevo programa, enfrentando una nueva dificultad, haciendo una nueva decisión.

Pero cada vez que encuentras un servicio que necesitas, o una respuesta

a tus preguntas, aumenta tu confianza. Has podido hacer algo por tu hijo.

Que Hacer

Recuerda que tu papel como madre te convierte en profesional. Tu eres la persona que ve a tu niño como una persona completa y no solo un niño con un problema a la espina dorsal, o problemas cognitivos, o retrasos en el desarrollo. Si tienes preocupaciones sobre la naturaleza o el número de intervenciones que tu niño está recibiendo, conversa con algunos de los otros profesionales que conocen a tu hijo y su situación.

Búsqueda Interior

Junto con tu búsqueda de respuestas para tu niño, también te encuentras en una exploración interior. Tu vida va ser distinta de la que habías planificado y anticipado. Tienes que encontrar una nueva identidad y solamente una parte de ella va a ser como la madre de un niño con necesidades especiales.

Susana: Una mañana eché una mirada alrededor mío. Carolina estaba encima de la mesa de la cocina en su silla de bebé, mirando hacia el frente, ocupada en ser anormal. La casa estaba hecha un desastre y estaba nublado. Miré en el espejo y nada bueno me devolvió la mirada. Tenía que estar en la casa por Carolina, pero yo necesitaba empezar a vivir otra vez. Yo quería que las cosas fueran distintas y me di cuenta que yo tendría que cambiarlas.

La discapacidad de tu hijo quizás dure para siempre, pero la urgencia e intensidad emocional que eso conlleva disminuye, y el significado de la discapacidad cambia para ti. Al comienzo creíste que el diagnóstico o discapacidad era el único factor determinante de la futura felicidad de tu hijo. Pero puedes llegar a ver que tu hijo es una persona completa que necesita un fuerte sentido de autoestima, persistencia, optimismo y apoyo para crecer y lograr su potencial.

Transformación de Búsqueda en Acomodación

En cierto momento te das cuenta que la solución a la que has llegado no perdurará para siempre, pero mientras dura puedes gozar de la estabilidad.

También te das cuenta que algunas de tus preguntas no tienen respuestas y paulatinamente te acostumbras a vivir con la ambigüedad y la incertidumbre. Por otro lado, la vida es generalmente impredecible para los padres en general.

Acomodación

Acomodarse es mirar al mundo como realmente es. Es pasar más allá de las intensas emociones y adquirir una sensación más grande de control y equilibrio en tu vida cotidiana.

Es un cambio de actitud. quizás no corresponde a la definición de tu vecino pero para ti y tu familia lo normal ha cambiado. Tu nueva vida normal puede incluir muchas visitas a profesionales, el manejo diario de medicamentos o equipo, interminables formularios de seguros, programas especiales a los cuales tienes que llamar e investigar pero ya no sientes tanta urgencia.

También te das cuenta que las intervenciones requieren tiempo y que no vas a ver resultados instantáneos. Van a ver avances y quizás también retrocesos. No tienes que pasarte todos los minutos del día con tu niño.

Seguramente sigues preocupándote, pero estás aprendiendo que preocuparse gasta energía y te altera.

Juanita: Exageramos tantas cosas, como ¿"Qué si tenemos que ir a una nueva escuela"? Pero cuando hay que hacer las cosas, uno simplemente las hace. Uno tiene que obtener nueva información y ser práctica, pero preocuparse mucho no lo hará más fácil.

Incluso tu perspectiva sobre tu niño necesita cambio. El equipo de adaptación no es un símbolo de discapacidad. Son ayudas para un funcionamiento más independiente. Tu también puedes ver que mientras enfrentas los problemas de tu hijo, no te obsesionas con ellos. Te preguntas si tu niño lo está pasando bien en vez de estar preocupada si está aprendiendo algo durante esa actividad.

Qué Hacer

Sigue adelante con tu vida. Todo está temporariamente bajo control y puedes estar agradecida del descanso mientras dure. Después de haber superado varias crisis puedes decidir que algo está por suceder pero tu lo sabes manejar. Y lo que viene después también.

La Vida no es un Camino Recto

Quizás no puedas avanzar fácilmente. De hecho, siempre habrán reveses. Una nueva crisis provocará búsqueda, y los problemas financieros causarán estrés adicional. Tu matrimonio, amistades, incluso el apoyo de tu familia puede cambiar.

Todas estas cosas traerán los sentimientos de supervivencia y búsqueda a primer plano. Pero también significa que la supervivencia y búsqueda son etapas pasajeras. Volverá el estado de acomodo.

Diana: Nos está yendo mejor que antes. Los momentos difíciles son más cortos. Y la razón es que uno tiene las habilidades para enfrentar las cosas, el conocimiento y los recursos para manejar los reveses.

La mayoría de los preescolares necesitan tención y ayuda adicional e lgún momento de su educación preescolar. Algunos niños necesitan más ayuda, o la necesitan por más tiempo, que otros niños. Algunos se lanzan de cabeza y nunca miran hacia atrás. Otros se meten al agua lentamente, sin estar seguros si deben deshacerse de sus vínculos con la infancia. Algunos niños tienen dificultades comprendiendo que es compartir y esperar su turno. Algunos son torpes o agresivos. A otros les cuesta acordarse de las reglas. Algunos niños necesitan mucha atención individual de su profesor; otros son independientes y auto-motivados, Todos los niños tienen días buenos y días no tan buenos, días de cansancio, días de felicidad, y días de mal genio. Los niños con necesidades especiales son frecuentemente atípicos solo en cuestión de grado.

Adaptado con el permiso de Nobody's Perfect: Living and Growing With Children Who Have Special Needs, por Nancy B. Miller, Ph.D., M.S.W. publicado por Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD. Teléfono: 1 800-638-3775. Internet: www.brookespublishing.com /store/books/miller-143x

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

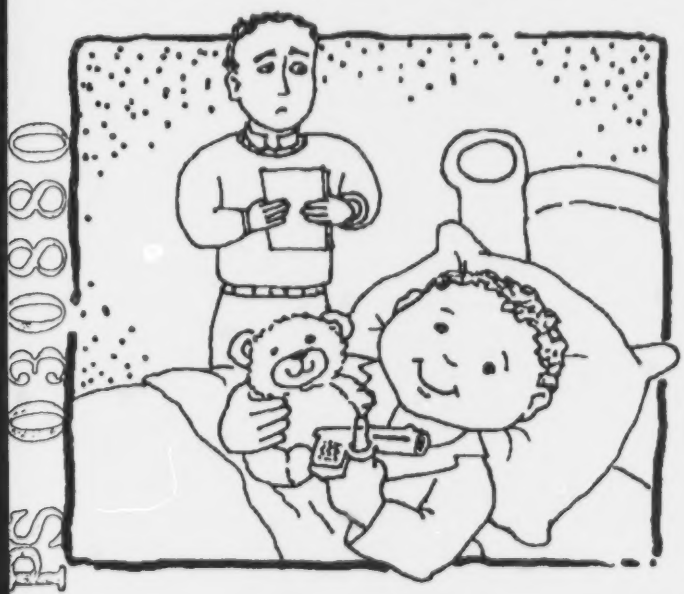
Volume 17, Number 3 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* March - 2002

Aggressiveness in Children

A Challenge for Parents and Teachers

It was bedtime and I had just finished reading a story to our three-year-old son Conor. As we curled up together in the soft glow of his night light he said, in his precious little-boy voice, "Daddy? Will you tell me just one more story?" Seeing him cuddled up with his favorite stuffed-animal, a cherubic smile on his face, there was no way I could refuse. So I made up a fanciful tale about flying to Venus, visiting the magical people who live there, and playing games with them. At the end of the story I asked Conor what games he would like to play with the people on Venus. He smiled, hugged his stuffed animal, and said in a happy voice, "Fighting games. With guns. With anything that shoots. I'll show them how to chop off a monster's head."

"That's....just great, honey," I said, not sure how else to respond to the Marine commando who had suddenly invaded the body of my innocent little three-year-old son.



Many parents are surprised and even shocked to discover that the imaginations of their preschool-age children are filled with aggressive and violent fantasies. Where do such aggressive inclinations come from? Why are some children much more fascinated by violent fantasies than other children? What can parents and teachers do when children act out their aggression by fighting, teasing, or engaging in other kinds of destructive activity? And, considering America's sudden shift to wartime status, what is the role of child education in an adult world where violent conflict is an immediate, frightening reality? In times such as these, there may be no greater educational task than helping children master the violent impulses that emerge in the first few years of their lives.

Aggression as Instinct

Humans are aggressive *by nature*—that is the consensus view of scientists who study human evolution. Aggression can be defined as the inherent drive to fight against others in order to promote and protect our own well-being.

The human species, like every other species on earth, has evolved by means of an energetic struggle for existence: fighting over resources, competing for living space, trying to eat other creatures, and trying *not* to be eaten by still others. Aggression is hard-wired into us; it is part of our genetic code.

Today, living in our comfortable homes, shopping for food at grocery stores, and protected by police and fire fighters, we may no longer appreciate the adaptive value of aggression. Although myths and religions may imagine a time in the far future when all violence will cease, peace will reign, and the lion will lie down with the lamb, the reality of human life right now is that we are born with the primal

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instincts of our animal ancestors, and one of the strongest of those instincts is aggression. Humans are naturally aggressive because aggression has helped us survive.

This may seem a despairing thought—does it mean society is doomed to perpetual fighting and violence? Not necessarily. Scientists have also found that humans are driven by a fundamental instinct to *cooperate*. It is just as genetically predetermined, just as hard-wired into us, for humans to band together, share resources, and protect one another.

All of the other primate (e.g., apes, gorillas, chimpanzees) have developed elaborate social networks to promote greater mutual survival. In humans this sociability instinct has inspired the creation of all the incredibly complex and far-ranging bonds of community. From the small scale of a family to the global scale of the United Nations, with countless other types of community in between (neighborhoods, bowling leagues, book clubs, schools, work places, religious traditions), our well-being is continually supported by the kindness and caring of other people.

Humans may be instinctually driven to act aggressively, but we are also instinctually driven to help each other out.

Anyone who spends time with young children knows well how both these things are true. Children can be fighting and screaming with each other—and moments later be best friends, sharing their toys and laughing together.

Cultural Influences

Aggression in children is certainly a product of nature, but it is just as certainly a product of nurture. The videos and TV shows children watch, the way they are disciplined by their parents, the relationships they have with their siblings, the teachings they receive at school, and other factors have an impact on how (if at all) children actually express their aggressive instincts.

Cultural influences can strongly shape the particular "style" of aggressive expression that each individual child develops. Among the most important of these cultural influences are:

Exposure to Actual Violence

If children are raised in a familial and/or cultural setting in which real physical aggression among adults (or toward children) is common, they are much more likely to behave aggressively themselves, in ways patterned after the adults they are observing.

Exposure to Fictional Violence

A similar result occurs if children see movies, watch television, or play video games that include repeated, graphic images of fighting, battling, and warfare. Any parent who has seen a child immediately go from watching a "Power Puff Girls" video to jumping around the room pretending to be one of the tiny super heroines knows how strong such cultural influences can be.

Birth Order

Some children express their aggressiveness differently depending on where they stand in the family system. Our son Conor, for example, is much more overtly aggressive than his older brother or sister—precisely because he is the youngest and by far smallest of three children, and thus has to fight the hardest to gain his parents' attention.

Playground Experiences

Children learn a tremendous amount from each other at school and play parks about the many different forms that aggression can take. On any given playground some children will be bullies, and others will be cruel teasers; some children are intensely competitive at games and contests, while others are tattle-tales, trying to punish anyone who breaks a rule.

A child's accumulated experiences with these various types of aggression can have a major impact on the development of his or her own style of aggressiveness.

Two Ways of Responding to Children's Aggression

Generally speaking, there are two basic theories about how parents and teachers should respond to aggressiveness in children.

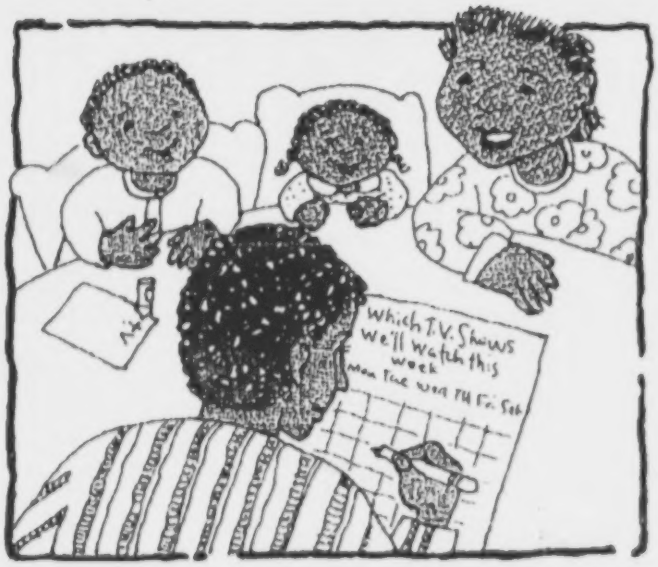
The first is that children should be shielded as much as possible from influences that might excessively

stimulate aggressive thinking and behavior. This means carefully monitoring the toys they play with (e.g., no guns or other weapons), the videos and TV shows they watch (e.g., no Power Puff Girls), the stories they read, the friends they play with, and so forth.

As a corollary to this approach, efforts should be made to encourage the instincts of cooperation and sociability. The stronger these moral sentiments grow, the more capable children become of controlling their impulses towards violence and responding cooperatively.

The second theory is that understanding children's aggressiveness can be healthy for their long-term development. Too much moral constraint on children can have the unintended consequence of frustrating their inclinations so much that they react against the pressure to "behave" with increased misbehavior. This can be avoided by a kind of "venting" of those feelings and inclinations by means of age-appropriate toys, games, and movies. The idea here is that it's better to teach children to release some of their aggressive energy in the safe, harmless sphere of fantasy rather than in their actual daily lives.

The art of child care, it seems to me, lies in knowing when to use the first approach, when to use the second, and when to blend them. Take as an example a boy



who arrives at preschool one morning and has a difficult time saying goodbye to his parent. A few minutes after the parent leaves, the boy starts yelling "I'm a Tyrannosaurs Rex!" and gets into a fistfight with another child.

In such a case the immediate response should be to stop the aggression by separating the children and firmly restating the school rules about hitting and kicking. This response follows the first approach in stopping aggressive behavior. The staff can explain to the boy that he may be angry or unhappy that his parents are leaving but also that fighting with other children is not acceptable.

An additional response might take the clue of the boy's dinosaur reference to provide him with a safer, less harmful outlet for his feelings. He might be encouraged to play with dinosaurs in a sand tray area, or draw pictures of them. The boy will probably express a great deal of real aggression in these fantasy activities as he expresses his anger and unhappiness. This may be disconcerting to adults and children alike, but the goal is to help the boy "blow off some steam" and make it less likely he'll express his aggressions in his interactions with other children.

In general, a combination of consistent training with creative channeling of aggressive emotional energy is most likely to promote healthy and balanced development in children.

Different Tactics for Different Ages

Just as children change in terms of their physical, intellectual, and social abilities as they get older, so they also change over the years in terms of how they express and manage their aggressive impulses. Each stage of development brings with it new forms of aggression, and this means that anyone who wants to help children learn how to manage these powerful energies needs to be sensitive to each child's particular developmental situation.

The basic trajectory in normal development is from physical to verbal expressions of aggression. While it may still be distressing to see how older children continue to yell, swear, and curse at each other, the huge importance of this developmental shift from the physical to the verbal should not be underestimated—it's better to have ambassadors arguing in the United Nations than countries shooting missiles at each other.

- ***Infants and Toddlers:***

These little ones have little concept of aggression. Infants and toddlers see others as interesting toys and objects rather than as separate living creatures. They may grab or pinch even swat another child without the intention to harm, merely to investigate or to take that interesting rattle the other child holds.

When this happens, gently stop the actions – if you yell you'll only upset or confuse. Then, redirect the child's attention. You can also begin to explain that people aren't objects and they have feelings and can be hurt. If your child is destroying a toy, remove it, again redirecting attention and provide a toy meant to

be used that way – a soft ball for throwing.

• ***Preschool (3 to 5 years old):*** Children at this age usually express aggression in terms of "out of control" physical behavior, such as hitting, kicking, spitting, biting, and so on. Few preschoolers have the cognitive ability to master their aggression by means of reasoning and verbal expression, so parents and teachers are best advised to 1) anticipate when a child is becoming so frustrated by a situation that a physical outburst of aggression is imminent, 2) redirect the aggressive energies in more constructive, less potentially harmful directions, and 3) establish clear, firm boundaries regarding what is and is not acceptable in terms of the child's physical interactions with others.

• ***Kindergarten and Early Grade School (6 to 8 years old):*** By this age children are somewhat less aggressive physically, and they begin expressing their aggression more frequently through verbal means such as teasing and cursing. Although it may not be as physically violent, the aggression at this age can be more calculating and cruel, with children picking on each other and making fun of weaknesses and insecurities. However, the increasing intellectual abilities of children at this age also make it possible for parents and teachers to reason with them more effectively. For example, early grade school children are ready to think about aggressive behavior in terms of how it feels to be the other person — "How would you like it if someone said that about you?" Encouraging this newly emergent capacity for empathy and taking another person's point of view is an extremely important means of helping children develop self-control over their aggressive impulses.

The Challenge for Parents and Teachers

The existence of a society of peaceful, law-abiding, mutually caring citizens depends in large part on the ability to manage our inherent aggressiveness. This ability first develops in the preschool years, so it is no exaggeration to say that the foundations of a civilized world are laid by the efforts of parents and teachers who help young children channel their aggressive instincts in constructive, socially beneficial ways.

That may sound like an awfully heavy burden. Many parents feel it's hard enough getting the kids fed and bathed each night without also having to worry about the fate of civilization resting on their shoulders. Although such responsibility is certainly daunting, I prefer to emphasize the creative aspects of this challenge: every parent and teacher has the opportunity to make small but real contributions to greater civility in the world. A vital part of any long-term strategy for restoring peaceful relations between people of different backgrounds is surely the vigorous cultivation of greater emotional maturity, impulse control, and cooperation in our children.

Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D. teaches Religion and Psychology at the Graduate Theological Union and is the author of several books on dreams, most recently "Transforming Dreams" (Wiley, 2000). He can be reached on the web at www.kellybulkeley.com

MOVING ???

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Dear Reader ...

Aggression is a fact of life for most children. They may be giving it, receiving it, or seeing it. It may happen in their schools, on the computer or television screen, or even in their relationships with their siblings.

The crucial question is what to do about it? This month *Parent & preschooler* explores the topic of children and aggression. Kelly Bulkeley Ph.D., who has written many other warm and wise articles, is back with another thought-provoking, yet practical, guide.

The issue of the media violence is also important on its own. It is so pervasive that we are probably unaware of how much of it our children experience. Many years ago my then-preschool son found out that my mother, his other grandmother, had died before he was born. He looked at me in horror. "Someone shoot her?" he whispered. Clearly, despite my monitoring of his television viewing my son had managed to see enough violence to conclude that the way people die is through being shot to death.

In fact, high levels of media violence have been around for so long most that of us are already desensitized. We tolerate it in the media because we've grown up with it. Perhaps we also need to look at our own exposure to violence, and our own reaction.

The question of violence and retaliation is still on the minds of people across the country. We still struggle with issues of how to respond when we are the victims of violence, how can we learn to live with the people around us, and what lessons we want to teach our children, who are always watching us.

March 17- 23 is Poison Prevention Week. Take a few minutes to read about how to protect your children. Book reviews, wonderful recipes for spring-time sandwiches round out our March issue.

Neala Schwartzberg

Violence and the Media

Research has consistently found that exposure to violence in the media influences children's behavior. Youngsters who watch more violence are more aggressive.

One of the ways children learn about accepted behavior is by watching the people around them, such as their parents. Of course, parents also provide explicit lessons, for example, explaining that lying is bad, being kind is good. But when children watch television this becomes another avenue, another way to learn about the world around them.

After seeing violence all around their media world, children come to think of the real world as a more violent, dangerous and mean place. "Shoot first, ask questions later," came from the world of fiction, not from the world in which most children live. Viewing violence teaches children that violence is acceptable.

Moreover, exposure to violence desensitizes viewers. The first few times people see violence they are horrified and upset, but after the 50th time aggression has lost its ability to arouse horror, or compassion.

Is all violence the same?

In The UCLA Television Report 1997 researchers point out that sometimes violence is critical to a story. Important lessons and moral learning often come from situations containing violence. They note that the historical drama Roots, movies such as The Lion King, and Schindler's List, stories such as the life of Abraham Lincoln would be impossible to convey without including some violent incidents.

They conclude "The issue is not the mere presence of violence but the nature of the violence and the context in which it occurs."

Parents' responsibility

Despite governmental efforts it's really parents' job to make informed decisions about their children's viewing. As parents monitor their children's television, movie, and video game diet to determine if the content is appropriate, here are some things to consider.

How much violence is there?

Is there an actual plot to the show or is it nothing more than one character attacking another over and over. Children are attracted to action. One way to increase the amount of action is to add fist-fights and physical confrontation. But these shows have little to teach children, except perhaps that violence by heroes is acceptable and that the world is a dangerous place with villains lurking around every corner.

Has anyone considered another solution?

Is violence always the answer to the problem? If so, what lessons does that provide to the children playing the game or watching the screen. They won't learn to even consider that there are other ways to handle disagreements and conflicts.

Are the consequences of violence shown?

In real life fist-fights cause physical pain. The person throwing the punch can end up with a broken hand, and the person on the other end with a broken nose. There's emotional pain too.

Sanitized violence: where no one is ever hurt, bones are never broken, and health is never endangered – leave children with the belief that violence leaves no scars, causes no damage. So, why not use it? And, if that violence is rewarded, if the perpetrator (especially if that's the good-guy) "wins" violence is shown to work. Why wouldn't a child think that aggressive is a good solution to conflict?

What is the show really about?

Is there a message? Is the story clear? Young children are very attuned to visual messages and much less sensitive to the verbal content. What is conveyed in the visual channel and what content is in the verbal channel?

What parents can do:

View several episodes to decide if the program is appropriate. As much as you can continue to watch with your child and comment on the decisions of characters, highlighting the important information.

If violence does occur, express your views on that behavior, and explain why. You can start with "In real life if someone did that..." and tell your children what would happen. Or ask them to tell you other ways someone could handle the situation.

Even if you think the plot of the show is fairly clear, sit down and ask your child to tell you what she thought the show was about. Young children generally remember only a string of scenes and physical actions without understanding how they fit together.

Control the video and computer games your child plays. You can't easily control what happens at other children's houses, but you can make sure that the games and videos you buy for your youngster are nonviolent. Why allow your son or daughter to practice shooting, slicing, and stabbing characters? Why not encourage them to think, solve puzzles and problems instead?

Learn more about children and television:

- ***Organizations***

- Center for Media Education 2120 L Street, N.W.; Suite 200; Washington, DC 20037; 202-331-7833; www.cme.org Children Now; 1212 Broadway; 5th Floor; Oakland, CA 94612; 510-763-2444; www.childrennow.org

- MediaScope; 12711 Ventura Blvd.; Suite 440; Studio City, CA 91604; 818-508-2080; www.mediascope.org

- *Children & the Media* by Katharine Heintz-Knowles; Available through the website http://www.childrennow.org/media/mc95/content_study.html

Neala Schwartzberg, PhD

Poison Prevention Week
March 17 to 23, 2002

Children Act Fast... So Do Poisons! Always be Watchful...

Parents must always be on alert when household chemicals or drugs are being used. Many incidents happen when adults who are using a product are momentarily distracted. The phone rings or someone comes to the door, and for that moment a pesticide, medication, cleaning solution is left within children's reach. Children act fast so adults need to make sure that household chemicals and medicines are kept away from children at all times.

Know how to find help

The phone number of your Poison Control Center is usually inside the cover of the yellow or white pages of the telephone directory. Be prepared; keep the number near the phone.

Your child is never too young to get into mischief

Preschoolers explore and investigate. Whatever they find they put in their mouths. When children crawl they can get into cleaners stored under the sink and on the floor. When they can pull themselves up they can grab the container of furniture polish, or spray cleaner that was left on the table...just for a moment. Ever leave medicine by your bed?

The solution is to lock up products. Safety caps help, if you use them properly. Install and use child-resistant latches on cabinets. And remind any child-care providers they too need to be cautious; children do act fast.

U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Poison Lookout Checklist

The kitchen and bathroom are two of the most common sites of accidental poisonings. Follow this checklist to learn how to correct situations that may lead to poisonings. If you answer "no" to any question, fix the situation quickly. The goal is to have all your answers "Yes."

The Kitchen

1. Do all harmful products in the cabinets have child-resistant caps?

Products like furniture polishes, drain cleaners and oven cleaners should have safety packaging to keep little children from accidentally opening the packages.

2. Are all potentially harmful products in their original containers?

There are two dangers if products aren't stored in their original containers. Labels on the original containers often give first aid information if someone should swallow the product. And if products are stored in containers like drinking glasses or pop bottles, someone may think it is food and swallow it.

3. Are harmful products stored away from food?

If harmful products are placed next to food, someone may accidentally get a food and a poison mixed up and swallow the poison.

4. Have all potentially harmful products been put up high and out of reach of children?

The best way to prevent poisoning is making sure that it's impossible to find and get at the poisons. Locking all cabinets that hold dangerous products is the best poison prevention.

The Bathroom

1. Did you ever stop to think that medicines could poison if used improperly?

Many children are poisoned each year by overdoses of aspirin. If aspirin can poison, just think of how many other poisons might be in your medicine cabinet.

2. Do your aspirins and other potentially harmful products have child-resistant closures?

Aspirin and most prescription drugs come with child-resistant caps. Check to see yours have them, and that they are properly secured and closed. Check your prescriptions before leaving the pharmacy to make sure the medicines are in child-resistant packaging. These caps have been shown to save the lives of children.

3. Have you thrown out all out-of-date prescriptions?

As medicines get older, the chemicals inside them can change. So what was once a good medicine may now be a dangerous poison. Flush all old drugs down the toilet. Rinse the continuer well, then discard it.

4. Are all medicines in their original containers with the original labels?

Prescription medicines may or may not list ingredients. The prescription number of the label will, however, allow rapid identification by the pharmacist of the ingredients should they not be listed. Without the original label and container, you can't be sure what you're taking. After all, aspirin looks a lot like poisonous roach tablets.

5. If your vitamins or vitamin/mineral supplements contain iron, are they in child-resistant packaging?

Most people think of vitamins and minerals as foods, and therefore nontoxic, but a few iron pills can kill a child.

For more information: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Washington, DC 20207 CPSC also provides a fax-on-demand service. Call their hotline for more information at 800-638-2772. You can also visit their website at: http://www.cpsc.gov/

EGGS-actly...*Being Safe with Eggs*

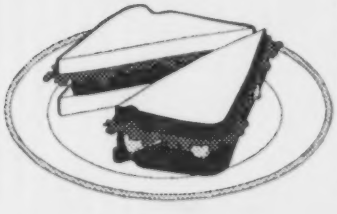
Remember that fresh eggs must be handled safely in order to protect the health of your family and friends. Even an egg with a clean and un-cracked shell may occasionally contain Salmonella, a bacteria that can cause an intestinal infection.

In order to prevent an illness, it is important to know how to purchase, store, handle and cook eggs and foods that contain eggs. First remember that eggs should be kept refrigerated at all times. When cooking eggs, cook until the yolks are firm. Thoroughly cook all foods that contain raw eggs.

For more information send a legal size, stamped, self-addressed envelope to: "Egg Safety" Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County; 1425 Old Country Road; Building J; Plainview, New York 11803-5010. If you have a question about eggs or other foods, call the 24-hour Food and Nutrition Helpline of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County at (516) 454-0900, Ext. 258.

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Sandwiches to Celebrate Spring



Spring is in the air. We can almost hear the trees shaking off the dormancy after so many months of winter, or the blossoms singing in the warmth of the sunlight. The robins are back and the geese, honking their day time serenade.

Springtime is time for outside activities, and it is nice to do the activities together with your little ones – planting flowers, cleaning the yard, playing games, or going to ballgames. I think the best part is to prepare sandwiches with your preschooler. I know that you all will have a great time working together.

There are so many sandwich meats and cheeses, smoked fish, vegetables, and fruits. Make a feast for yourselves.

Here are two recipes that were my favorites as a child. Wherever we went, we always carried these morsels in baskets with fruits, cakes, cookies, and water.

Mariner's Sandwich

1 - 6-oz can of tuna, drained of all the liquids
3 tablespoons sour cream
1 tablespoon green onion, chopped
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon mayonnaise, it can be "lite"
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
2 small ripe pears, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon lemon juice
8 slices of whole grain bread, or any other type of bread.
Soft butter or margarine

• Adult: Open the can of tuna, set aside. Rinse the green onion, and parsley, and chop them finely. Set aside. Cut the lemon into half, set aside. Rinse and core the pears, and thinly slice them. Drizzle with lemon juice and set aside. Remove the crusts from the slices of bread, saving them for bread crumbs or to feed the birds. Set the slices of bread aside. Drain the tuna of oil or water.

• Child: In a bowl, combine the sour cream, chopped onion, and parsley, mayonnaise, black pepper, and tuna. Mix and mash everything well until paste-like.

• Adult and Child: Spread some butter, margarine or mayonnaise on all 8 of the slices. Spread the tuna mixture evenly on the four slices. Arrange the slices of pear over the tuna mixture. Cover with the remaining bread pressing firmly. Wrap with waxed paper, and then with aluminum foil and pack in your cooler.

Makes 4 sandwiches

Rainbow Sandwich

16 thin slices of cooked ham
16 slices of salami
1 small apple, rinsed and grated
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
About 8 green olives, chopped
3 sprigs of green onions chopped
2 of each roasted red and yellow peppers
1 cucumber, thinly sliced
8 pumpernickel bread slices

• Adult: Grate the apple and set it aside. Slice the cucumber thinly. Set it aside. Chop the olives and set aside. Chop the green onions and set aside. Cut peppers into julienne sticks and set aside.

• Child: In a bowl combine and mix the apple, mayonnaise, chopped olives, and green onions.

• Adult and Child: Spread the mayonnaise mixture on all 8 slices. Arrange 1 slice of ham over the 4 pieces of bread, then 1 slice of salami, then roasted peppers, then cucumber. Repeat for another layer, ending up with the cucumber. Cover with the remaining bread. Wrap with waxed paper, then with aluminum foil. Place in the cooler. Makes 4 sandwiches.

Fruit and Yogurt Drink

This drink can be made with almost any fresh fruit, so, be adventurous and use the tropical ones like mango, passion fruit, star fruit, or pineapple. This version uses papaya.

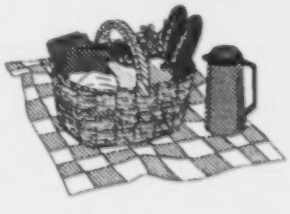
1 papaya, rinsed, peeled, seeded, and cut into small pieces
2 cups plain yogurt
1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup coconut milk (unsweetened if possible)
2 tablespoons honey

• Adult: Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Cover and refrigerate until very cold. Take with you on picnics or on trips for a filling and delicious pick-me-up.

• Child: At serving time, decorate the glasses by hanging cold fruit slices on the edge of the glass. Serves 4.

It's spring. Find a good spot, perhaps with a beautiful view, and sit down and enjoy your sandwiches and this very special time with your youngsters. And, don't forget the special fruit drinks, water, cakes and cookies. And, of course, don't forget to enjoy!

Sandy Allen



Library Resources

Helping Children Learn Life Lessons

📖 ***Flip Flops*** written and illustrated by Nancy Cote; Albert Whitman & Co.; Morton Grove, IL.; 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. When Penny and her Mom spend a day at the beach Penny discovers that friendship is the most powerful and rewarding experience of all and that possessions can be the most fun when they are shared.

📖 ***If*** by Mary Murphy; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 1999; Lift-the-flap, $4.95. The little penguin learns about achieving success. If you keep trying...(lift the flap) you can score a goal. If you look and look (lift the flap) you will find what you want.

📖 ***It's Okay to Be Different*** by Todd Parr; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 2001; Hardcover $14.95. There are all kinds of ways to be different, and this book, with a touch of humor, reminds children that it's always okay. Even if it's eating macaroni and cheese in the bathtub, or saying 'no' to bad things, or coming in last in a race.

📖 ***Moon Sandwich Mom*** by Jennifer Richard Jacobson; illustrated by Benrei Huang; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 1999 Hardcover $14.95. Rafferty wants to play but his mom doesn't have the time so he decides to run away from home and live with his friends. But it's never quite as good as being at home.

📖 ***On Monday When It Rained*** by Cherryl Kachenmeister; photographs by Tom Berthiaume; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 1989; Softcover, $5.95. A little boy experiences a full range of emotions in response to situations in his life. He feels proud when his teacher compliments his drawing, scared when he watches a monster movie, and angry when a friend won't share toys.

📖 ***Piggy Monday: A tale about manners*** by Suzanne Bloom; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2001; Hardcover $15.95. Mrs. Hubbub's class was not behaving. They were rude and selfish, and one by one, they all began to turn into pigs. The Pig Lady diagnoses their problem and prescribes the solution...they all have to mind their manners. And it works.

📖 ***Somewhere Today: A book of peace*** by Shelley Moore Thomas; photographs by Eric Futran; Albert Whitman & Co.; Morton Grove, IL; 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. With lyrical text and glowing photographs this book illustrates the many modest ways we can make the world a better place.

📖 ***Sorry*** by Jean Van Leeuwen; pictures by Brad Sneed; Phyllis Fogelman Books (Penguin Putnam); New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. What can happen when two brothers fight and never make up? Their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren continue the feud, even if they don't know why they are feuding. Everyone is missing the joys of family until one day, one boy about to fight with his distant cousin...apologizes instead. And that changes everything.

📖 ***The Very Lonely Firefly*** by Eric Carle; Philomel Books (Penguin Putnam); New York; 1995; Boardbook $10.99. The little firefly is very lonely and keeps looking for other fireflies. Finally, the efforts are rewarded ...lots of fireflies are found flashing their lights. The book comes with a small battery to light up the tiny fireflies.

📖 ***When I Feel Angry*** by Cornelia Maude Spellman; illustrated by Nancy Cote; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2000 Hardcover. When things go wrong, this little child feels angry and wants to say or do mean things but instead discovers there are others things to do. A very good book to read with children to help them learn about anger.

📖 ***Willy's Noisy Sister*: A kids can choose book** by Elizabeth Crary; illustrated by Susan Avishai; Parenting Press, Inc.; Seattle, Washington; 2001; Softcover $7.95. This is less a story book and more a tool to use with children to help them discover ways to solve dilemmas. Willy's sister just won't let him be. What can he do about it? This book, and the others in the series, helps children learn to solve social problems.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
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480 Old Westbury Road
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

En Español

Volume 17 Number 3 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | March - 2002

La Agresividad en los Niños

Es Un Desafío Para Padres y Maestro

Era hora de acostarse y yo acababa de leerle un cuento a Carlos, nuestro hijo de tres años. Cuando nos recostábamos juntos en el suave resplandor de la luz de su velador me dijo con su preciosa voz de niñito, ¿"Papi? ¿Me cuentas un cuento más"? Viéndolo abrazado a su oso peluche favorito, con una sonrisa beatifica en la cara, no era posible que me negara. Así que inventé un cuento sobre un vuelo a Venus para visitar a la gente mágica que vive ahí y sobre jugar con ellos. Al final del cuento le pregunté a Carlos que tipo de juegos le gustaría jugar con la gente de Venus. Sonrió, abrazó a su oso peluche, y me dijo con voz feliz, "Juegos de pelea. Con pistolas. Con cualquiera cosa que dispare. Les enseñaré a cortarle la cabeza a un monstruo".

"Ah... pero que fantástico, mi amor", le dije, sin estar seguro como responderle al pequeño infante de marina que había súbitamente invadido el cuerpo de mi inocente hijo de tres años.

Muchos padres se sorprenden o incluso se asombran al descubrir que las imaginaciones de sus hijos preescolares están llenas de fantasías agresivas y violentas. ¿De donde vienen esas inclinaciones agresivas? ¿Por qué algunos niños están mucho más fascinados por estas fantasías violentas que otros niños? ¿Que pueden hacer los padres y maestros cuando los niños ejercen su agresión peleando, mofándose, o involucrándose en otros tipos de actividad agresiva? Y, considerando que los Estados Unidos ha súbitamente pasado a un estado de guerra, ¿cual es el papel de la educación de los niños en un mundo de adultos donde los conflictos violentos son una realidad inminente y aterrante? En tiempos como estos, quizás no exista una tarea educacional más importante que ayudar a los niños a controlar los impulsos violentos que emergen durante los primeros años de sus vidas.

La Agresividad Como Instinto

Los seres humanos son agresivos por naturaleza -ese es el consenso de los científicos que estudian la evolución humana. La agresión puede ser definida como el impulso inherente de luchar contra otros para poder promover y proteger nuestro propio bienestar.

La especie humana, como cualquiera otra especie en la tierra, ha evolucionado por

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medio de una enérgica lucha por la existencia: lucha por recursos, competencia por espacio para vivir, tratando de comer a otras criaturas, y tratando de no ser comida por las otras. La agresión es biológica: es parte de nuestro código genético.

Hoy, cuando vivimos en nuestras cómodas casas, comprando nuestros alimentos en supermercados, protegidos por policías y bomberos, quizás ya no apreciamos el valor de adaptación de la agresión. Aunque los mitos y religiones pueden imaginar un tiempo en el futuro lejano cuando se acabe la violencia y reinará la paz, y el león dormirá junto al cordero, la realidad de la vida humana en este momento es que nacemos con los instintos primordiales de nuestros antecesores, y uno de los instintos más fuertes es el de agresión. Los seres humanos son naturalmente agresivos porque la agresión nos ha ayudado a sobrevivir.

Esto puede parecer una idea muy sombría -quiere decir que la sociedad está condenada a violencia y luchas perpetuas? No necesariamente. Los científicos también han descubierto que los seres humanos están impulsados por un instinto fundamental de cooperación. Es asimismo tan genéticamente establecido, tan biológico, que los seres humanos se agrupen, compartan recursos, y se protejan entre si.

Todos los otros primates (Ej., monos, gorilas, chimpancés) han desarrollado complejas redes sociales para promover la supervivencia mutua. En los humanos, este instinto de sociabilidad ha inspirado la creación de todos los lazos increíblemente complejos de comunidad. Desde la nivel de una familia a la escala global de Naciones Unidas, con un sinnúmero de otros tipos de comunidad en el medio (barrios, ligas de fútbol, clubes de libros, escuelas, lugares de trabajo, tradiciones religiosas), nuestro bienestar está constantemente apoyado por la sensibilidad y bondad de otras personas.

Los seres humanos pueden estar instintivamente impulsados a actuar agresivamente, pero también estamos instintivamente impulsados a ayudarnos mutuamente.

Cualquiera persona que pasa tiempo con niños pequeños sabe muy bien que ambas cosas son verdad. Los niños pueden estar peleando y gritándose –y momentos más tarde puede ser mejores amigos, compartiendo juguetes y riéndose.

Influencias Culturales

La agresión en los niños es ciertamente un producto de la naturaleza, pero también es ciertamente un producto de la formación. Los videos y los programas de televisión que los niños miran, la manera en que son disciplinados por sus padres, las relaciones que tienen con sus hermanos, la enseñanza que reciben en el colegio, y otros factores tienen un impacto en como (si es que lo hacen) los niños realmente expresen sus instintos agresivos. La influencias culturales son poderosas influencias sobre el "estilo" específico de expresión agresiva que cada niño desarrolla. Entre las más importantes influencias culturales están:

Exposición a Violencia Real

Si los niños son criados en un ambiente familiar y/o cultural en el cual agresión física real entre los adultos (o hacia los niños) es común, es mucho más probable que ellos se comporten más agresivamente, de maneras copiadas a los adultos que están observando.

Exposición a Violencia Ficticia

Un resultado similar se observa si los niños ven películas, miran televisión, o juegan juegos de video que incluyen imágenes graficas que se repiten de peleas, batallas y guerra. Cualquier padre que ha visto a un niño que pasan rápidamente después de ver un video de "Las Chicas Súper Poderosas" a saltar por toda la sala pretendiendo ser una de las pequeñas heroínas sabe cuan fuerte pueden ser las influencias culturales.

Orden de Nacimiento

Algunos niños expresan su agresividad de distintas maneras dependiendo de donde están situados en el sistema familiar. Por ejemplo, nuestro hijo Carlos es muchos más abiertamente agresivo que su hermano mayor o su hermana - exactamente por que es el menor y el más chico de los tres niños, y por lo tanto, tiene que lidiar mas para obtener la atención de sus padres.

Experiencias en el Patio de Recreo

Los niños aprende enromes cantidades de otros niños en la escuela o en los patios de recreo sobre las distintas formas que la agresión puede tener. En cualquier patio de recreo algunos niños serán los matones y otros serán burladores crueles; algunos niños serán intensamente competitivos en los juegos y concursos, mientras que otros son soplones que tratan de castigar a cualquiera que quiebra las reglas.

Las experiencias acumuladas por el niño con los distintos tipos de agresión pueden tener un impacto fundamental en el desarrollo de su estilo de agresividad.

Dos Maneras de Responder a la Agresividad de los Niños

En general, hay dos teorías básicas sobre como los padres y maestros deben responder a la agresividad en los niños.

La primera es que los niños deben ser aislados lo más posible de las influencias que puedan estimular conductas y pensamientos agresivos. Esto significa un cuidadoso monitoreo de los juguetes con que juegan (por ejemplo, nada de pistolas u otras armas), los videos y los programas de televisión que miran (por ejemplo, nada de Las Chicas Súper Poderosas), los cuentos que

leen, los amigos con que juegan, y cosas por el estilo.

Como corolario de este enfoque, se deben hacer esfuerzos para alentar los instintos de colaboración y sociabilidad. Entre más fuertes crecen estos sentimientos, los niños son más capaces de controlar sus impulsos hacia la violencia y de responder cooperativamente.

La segunda teoría es que la comprensión de la agresividad de los niños puede ser saludable para su desarrollo a largo plazo. Demasiadas restricciones morales en los niños puede tener consecuencias inesperadas de frustrar tanto sus inclinaciones, que reaccionan a la presión de "portarse bien" con más mala conducta. Esto puede ser evitado con una especie de "desahogo" de esos sentimientos e inclinaciones por medio de juguetes, juegos, y películas apropiadas a la edad. La idea es que es mejor enseñarle a los niños a soltar algo de su energía agresiva en el ámbito seguro de la fantasía en vez de su vida cotidiana real.

El arte de criar niños, me da la impresión, está en saber cuando usar el primer enfoque, cuando usar el segundo, y cuando mezclarlos. Tomemos como ejemplo a un niño que llega al jardín infantil una mañana y tiene problemas en despedirse de sus padres, Unos pocos minutos después que su padre se han ido, el niño empieza a gritar "Soy un Tyrannosaurus Rex"! y se involucra en una pelea a puñetes con otro niño.

En un caso como ese la respuesta inmediata debe ser parar la agresión separando a los niños y con firmeza reiterarles las reglas de la escuela sobre pegar y patear. Esta respuesta sigue el primer enfoque sobre detener la conducta agresiva. El personal puede explicarle al niño que puede que esté enojado o infeliz que sus padres se hayan ido pero que pelear con otros niños es también inaceptable.

Una respuesta adicional es tomar la pista de referencia del niño sobre el dinosaurio y darle una salida más segura y menos nociva a sus sentimientos. Podría ser alentado a jugar con dinosaurios en la zona de arena del jardín de recreo, o que los dibuje. El niño seguramente va a expresar mucha agresión real en estas actividades de fantasía a medida que expresa su ira y descontento. Esto puede ser desconcertante para ambos los adultos y los niños, pero la meta es ayudar al niño a "desahogarse" y hacer menos probable que exprese sus agresiones en su interacción con otros niños.

En general, es más probable que una combinación de constante formación con una canalización creativa de la energía emocional promueva un desarrollo más saludable y equilibrado en los niños.

Distintas Tácticas para Distintas Edades

Así como los niños cambian en términos de sus capacidades físicas, intelectuales, y sociales a medida que crecen, también cambian a través de los años en cuanto a como expresan y manejan sus impulsos agresivos. Cada etapa del desarrollo trae consigo nuevas formas de agresión, y esto implica que cualquier persona que quiera ayudar a los niños a aprender a manejar esta fuertes energías tiene que ser sensible a la situación específica de su desarrollo. La trayectoria básica en el desarrollo normal es de pasar de la agresión física a la verbal. A pesar de aun ser inquietante ver como los niños de más edad continúan gritando, insultándose e imprecándose entre si, la gran importancia de este cambio en el desarrollo de lo físico a lo verbal no deber ser menospreciado -es mucho mejor que los embajadores discutan acaloradamente en las Naciones Unidas que los países estén tirándose misiles entre ellos.

--Los Bebés y los Niños Chicos: Estos pequeñuelos tienen poca idea sobre la agresión. Los bebés y los niños chicos ven a otros como juguetes u objetos interesantes en vez de a otras criaturas vivientes. Ellos pueden agarrar o peñiscar o incluso manotear a otro niño sin la intención de causarle daño, solo para investigar o quitarle ese cascabel interesante que tiene el otro niño.

Cuando suceda esto, pare la acción con delicadeza -si gritas solo los confundirás y perturbaras. Después, redirige la atención del niño. También puedes empezar a explicarle que la gente no son objetos y que tienen sentimientos y que pueden ser lesionados. Si su niño está destruyendo un juguete, quíteselo, y una vez más redirija su atención y déle un juguete que está diseñado para eso -una

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pelota blanda que pueda tirar.

-Preescolares (3 a 5 años): Los niños a esta edad generalmente expresan la agresión en términos de conducta física "fuera de control": golpes, patadas, morder y cosas por el estilo. Pocos preescolares tienen la capacidad cognitiva para manejar su agresión a través de razonamiento y expresión verbal, así que los padres y maestros se les aconseja a 1) anticipar cuando el niño se está poniéndose tan frustrado por una situación que un arranque de agresión física es inminente. 2) redirija las energías agresivas a una dirección más constructiva y menos potencialmente dañina, y 3) establezca límites claros y firmes en cuanto a que es aceptable en términos de la interacción física del niño con los otros.

--Kindergarten y Primeros Años de Escuela Elemental (6 a 8 años): En esta edad los niños ya están un poco menos físicamente agresivos y empiezan a expresar su agresión más frecuentemente a través de medios verbales, como las burlas y las palabrotas. A pesar de que no es tan físicamente violenta, la agresión a esta edad puede ser más deliberada y cruel, con los niños hostigándose y mofándose de debilidades e inseguridades. Sin embargo, las crecientes habilidades intelectuales de los niños en esta edad también hace posible que los padres y profesores puedan razonar con ellos más efectivamente. Por ejemplo, los niños de los primeros años de escuela elemental están preparados para pensar sobre conductas agresivas en términos de cómo se siente ser la otra persona: -¿"Te gustaría que otra persona diga eso sobre ti"?- Alentar esta capacidad emergente de empatía y de poder ver las cosas del punto de vista de otra persona es una manera muy importante de ayudar a los niños a desarrollar autocontrol sobre sus impulsos agresivos.

El Desafió Para los Padres y Maestros

La existencia de una sociedad de ciudadanos, respetuosos de la ley y solidarios depende en gran parte de la habilidad de manejar nuestra inherente agresividad. Esta habilidad se desarrolla primero en los años preescolares, así que no es exageración decir que las bases de un mundo civilizado son sentadas por los esfuerzos de padres y maestros que ayudan a los niños a canalizar sus instintos agresivos de maneras constructivas y socialmente beneficiosas.

Esto puede parecer una carga muy pesada. Muchos padres piensan que es suficientemente difícil alimentar y bañar a los niños todas las noches sin también tener que preocuparse sobre que el destino de la civilización recaiga sobre sus hombros. A pesar de que esa responsabilidad es ciertamente difícil, yo prefiero recalcar los aspectos creativos de este desafió: todos los padres y maestros tienen la oportunidad de hacer una pequeña pero verdadera contribución a tener más conciencia en el mundo. Una parte vital de cualquiera estrategia a largo plazo para restaurar la convivencia pacífica entre personas de distintas condiciones es indudablemente el cultivo vigoroso de más madurez emocional, control de los impulsos, y cooperación en nuestros niños.

Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D. enseña Religión y Psicología en el Graduate Theological Union y es autor de varios libros sobre sueños, y su libro más reciente es "Transforming Dreams" (Wiley, 2000). Puede ser contactado en el Web en www.kelly-bulkeley.com.

Translated By TIKAL Translations (212) 569-6475

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
© Copyright 2002 NSCFGC. Printed in the United States of America.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17 Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* April - 2002

A Storyteller's Guide to Reading Aloud

Each summer, when the crickets gather outside my window and I hear the distant chimes of the roving ice cream truck, I'm transported to the neighborhood of my youth. Gigi, my cousin, lived down the block from me and we spent our childhood climbing up and down the hill that separated our homes.

Many years have passed since the two of us stayed awake all night giggling and gossiping at one of our regular slumber parties, but there are certain memories that won't fade: the crisp floral sheets on the guest bed I always slept in at her house; the white cereal bowls filled with corn flakes and wheat germ that awaited us in the morning; and the utter delight we felt each time my Aunt Blanka read to us before turning out the light.

My aunt only read us Dr. Seuss books. In fact, I can't even recall seeing any other books in my cousin's room. Yet somehow, we didn't mind hearing *The Cat in the Hat* or *Green Eggs and Ham* over and over again. We got to know the rhymes by heart and would recite them along with my aunt. The repetition was comforting to me, like an old friend whose behavior was predicable but never boring. But those read-aloud evenings did more than simply entertain. They jump-started our imaginations, endowed us with playful language, and left us with a love of story. They showed us that the world extended beyond our backyards and taught us about life's infinite possibilities.

From *The Cat in the Hat* we learned to suspend cynicism by embracing dancing goldfish, runaway kites, and blue-haired men named Thing One and Thing Two. It was okay to express yourself playfully, by sporting an enormous floppy hat, using nonsensical words, and letting a magical machine steam roll through your living room. But we also learned that with every choice comes a consequence. Running amok with a spontaneous feline is fun. Cleaning up its mess is more complicated.

It's wonderful to be a story-teller, creating entrancing tales to share with our youngsters, but for those of us who don't feel comfortable inventing stories, or telling tales we know by heart, reading to our kids confers real benefits. We know for a fact that reading to children builds their vocabulary, improves reading and writing skills, stimulates creativity, and bonds adult and child. The Commission of Reading, funded by the US Department of Education stressed that the single foremost activity for building knowledge for eventual success is reading aloud.

But there are other less obvious but equally profound benefits to reading aloud rarely measured by researchers. Hearing stories shapes our lives, helping us make sense of our past and present experience. It

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

also encourages us to imagine possibilities for ourselves for the future.Daniel Taylor, an English professor and author of The Healing Power of Stories (Doubleday, 1996) suggests that our ability to see ourselves as something more and better than we presently are is dependent on these story-making abilities. This vision of our possibilities grows from the power of our imagination to see and believe future stories in which our lives are rich and meaningful.

So, reading aloud isn't just about strengthening your children's reading skills. It's about strengthening their story skills: giving them plot lines to emulate, heroes to model themselves after, and villains against which children can test their values. You'll also be helping them to see their own lives in perspective. Jim Trelease, the author of The Read-Aloud Handbook (Penguin, 1982, 2001) has suggested that filling your kids' heads with stories about other people's experiences let's them say 'Hey, the same thing happened to me. I'm not alone.'

By building a story-rich home, you'll not only have fun, strengthen family bonds, and expand your children's imaginations, but you'll also be constructing an invaluable framework within which your kids can live.

As a professional storyteller, I've picked up some helpful techniques and tips over the last fifteen years telling stories to kids. Try following the guidelines below, designed to bring to life your read-aloud story while inspiring your kids to ask for them again and again.

- ***Make this a participatory experience.*** Before you even begin reading, you can get your kids involved by asking them to put on their imaginary storytelling hats and describing them in detail to you. Ask them questions to help this process along.
- ***Don't read too quickly.*** Take your time delivering each word. Linger, indulging in the richness of the language. Reading slowly doesn't diminish your child's enjoyment. On the contrary, the more time you take, the better they'll be able to visualize the story. Would you rush past the Mona Lisa, or would you take the time to study it? Treat the language in your book like a visual portrait. Each word creates a new stroke of the paintbrush, and a new picture for your kids to absorb. It's better to only get through one-third of a book, taking time to answer your child's questions and delight in the story's language and characters, than to rush through the entire book in order to finish.
- ***Turn the pages slowly.*** It takes lots of time for your child to digest everything on the page. You may have completed a passage about a red

rooster crossing the road, but your child will still be looking at the dotted yellow line in the middle of the road, the funny looking feather that fell off the rooster's back, the Jeep that is driving on the other side of the road, the child that is staring at all of this in the far right corner of the illustration, and the apple tree that hovers over the child who is staring.

One way to assure you're not moving along too quickly is by asking your child to be the page turner. That way, he'll have an active part in the storytelling process, and he'll turn the page after he has digested everything he needs to see.

- ***Resist the temptation to disrupt a story to provide facts and vocabulary.*** Remember that this is about sharing a story with your child, not achieving a better reading score. It's very important not to interrupt a story midway to ask an instructive question like, "That story takes place in Miami. Do you remember where Miami is on the map?" We've become so consumed with factual truths that we forget that in the world of stories, emotional truths play as important a role. If you interrupt the story to convey outside facts, you disrupt your child's emotional connection to the characters and action. This doesn't mean you shouldn't respond to the questions your children may ask while you read. But give them room to analyze a story in their own unique way, and draw their own conclusions and observations.
- ***Don't worry too much about the details of a story.*** My philosophy is, if you don't like it, change it. If the writing in a particular book isn't rich enough for me, I embellish it with adjectives. If a story has an unsavory character, I make him more likable, perhaps through the voice I give him, or in the way I change his plot line. Storybooks are mere skeletons. The embellishments and twists you bring to the reading

create the full body of a story.

You may like a particular author's use of language and rhythm and feel that changing it around destroys the integrity of the writing. If that's the case, don't do it. Nobody wants you to alter something you hold dear. But one approach you might consider is to read the book exactly as it is written several times, until your kids are familiar with the original version. Then tell them it's time for some fun by saying, "I love this book, but I think there could be different endings to the story. Let's rewrite the ending using the author's language and rhythms."

▪ ***Don't use a book as a threat.*** Follow the suggestion of reading-aloud advocate Jim Trelease and avoid saying things like, "If you don't pick up your room, no story tonight!" As soon as your child sees that you've turned the book into a weapon, they'll change their attitude about books from positive to negative.

▪ ***Try not to read stories that you don't like.*** Your distaste for them will come out, even if you try to hide it.

▪ ***Make the most out of illustrations.*** Treat every object in a picture as a place where a story hides. Ask your kids to climb into the picture and become an object or character in it, describing what the experience is like. Or create an entirely new story based on the illustration.

▪ ***Substitute silly words.*** If you've read a certain book many times and your child is familiar with the text, try substituting a silly word in place of the real one. For example, you might read, "Jack and Jill/Went up the hill/To fetch a pail of lemonade." Inevitably, your child will correct you and laugh while doing it. It's a great way to keep her attention while developing her listening skills.

▪ ***Modulate your voice.*** Just the slightest change in your voice can cause an outbreak of giggles during bedtime readings. Try changing it according to the characters and incidents in the book. Why not stretch your voice each time Pinocchio's nose grows by elongating your words, or drop your head, yawn, and read sluggishly when Winnie the Pooh starts to fall asleep? Remember, there are more ways to change your voice than simply raising or lowering it.

▪ ***Pay attention to speed and tempo.*** Speeding up or slowing down during a reading can be an extremely powerful tool for ensnaring your listeners. But it's only effective if you use the tempo changes sparingly. Pick out areas where it makes sense to do it, such as during a character's emotional highs or lows, during any kind of movement, like a car, train, or plane ride, or during a character's slow time, like when he's sleeping or loafing. Changing the tempo will not only excite your listeners, but it will also keep you from getting bored, especially if this is the hundredth time of reading the same story.

▪ ***Use silences.*** Professional storytellers use silence to manipulate their audiences and so should you. Choose an area in the text to which you want to draw attention and instead of reading it as usual, pause, and become totally silent for a second, before carrying on with the story. If you really want to create suspense, make direct eye contact with your children during that silence. You'll be amazed how drawn in your kids will be.

Don't stop reading aloud to your kids once they learn to read. Reading aloud should continue as long as possible, even after a child has learned to read. Not only will it help your kids excel in their math and verbal skills, but it will create and seal a special bond with your child.

Lisa Lipkin is a professional storyteller and the author of "Bringing the Story Home: The Complete Guide to Storytelling for Parents," W. W. Norton, 1990. It has recently be released in paperback form. For more info, contact her at **Lisastories@aol.com.**

To Camp or Not to Camp

It's April and time to think about camp. Is your preschooler ready to take this very big step? The NY/NJ Office of Summer Solutions offers the following tips:

▪ Talk to your child about camping. This is your best barometer as to whether he is ready.

▪ Visit camps as early as possible and get pamphlets and other materials from camps you are considering.

▪ Get and check out references carefully.

▪ Discuss camping with your child's pediatrician - she can give you some great guidelines as to whether your preschooler is ready for camping.

For more information, go to the website of the American Camping Association at: http:\\www.acaohio.org

Hearing

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (Newborn and Infant Hearing Loss:Detection and Intervention; Policy Statement RE9846) deafness is one of the most common birth defects.

The average age at which deafness is identified in the U.S. is about 14 months. That sounds pretty good, but it's not. It's well after language and learning abilities have begun to develop, leaving the hearing-impaired child vulnerable to later difficulties.

Repeated studies have shown that early identification of deafness is crucial. Children whose hearing losses are identified by six months of age demonstrated significantly better language scores than children identified after six months of age.

To understand why this is so important, we'll take a bit of a detour into the development of babies' brains.

Humans seem to be wired to learn language. Children through out the world develop language in the same general way. They start with babbles that gradually form recognizable syllables, single words, two word sentences which gradually grow more and more complex. They even learn the underlying grammatical structure of language. It's only later on, after they can create meaningful sentences that we send them to school to learn grammar. But, they've already intuited the rules long before. In fact, a whole section of the brain is devoted to just this activity.

The capacity to learn language exists at birth. Although it seems to unfold all by itself, language is critically shaped by experience. Parents and other adults teach the particular language we learn to speak, the way the words are pronounced. But in order to function that part of the brain has to be exposed to the sounds of language. Children who have been deprived of exposure to language can be slow to develop speech, and may have great difficulty overcoming this early loss.

Children need to hear language to learn language, particularly how to put words together into meaningful sentences. Although almost all children are exposed to language, this early exposure becomes an important issue for children with a hearing problem. If their impairment is not diagnosed early so that they can be exposed to language, their ability to understand the complex rules of grammar will not develop properly.

As a result of the importance of early identification the American Academy of Pediatrics has endorsed universal newborn screening. In fact, more and more states have programs mandating testing of infants before they leave the hospital.

Of course, hearing problems can develop at any age due to illness or injury. Don't take your youngsters hearing for granted. If you have any questions about possible loss, contact your child's pediatrician.

Want to learn more? The American Academy of Pediatrics has teamed up with Wal-Mart and Pampers Parenting Institute to provide free infant hearing screening brochure. It's part of their Babies First campaign. If you can't find it in the stores, you can download a copy at: http://www.aap.org/bfc/NewbornHearing_Eng.pdf

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.

Dear Reader ...

When I was growing up it seemed to be my father's job and his pleasure to read to me. He wouldn't tell the stories as much as he would act them out, modulating his beautiful voice as an instrument from whispers to booming calls.

I had forgotten how much I enjoyed being read to until a couple of years ago. A friend, demonstrating how he would read to his elementary school classes, told me a story. It was about a man who wanted to impress a lady by watching her goldfish. My friend's voice rose and fell, his tempo changed. I was spellbound. I thought "if that guy really wanted to impress that lady he would have read her a story instead of watching her fish."

That was when I realized...we're never too old to listen to a good story. And, we're never too young either. This month Lisa Lipkin, a renown story-teller, has written an article on how we all can become read-aloud experts. It's filled with encouragement and wonderful suggestions. With practice we can all learn to enchant our youngsters.

This year Earth Day is April 22nd. We're celebrating with special activities and crafts. This is also the perfect time to introduce Bill Brown, a botanist and former elementary school teacher, who has written an A to Z garden primer for us. He'll be writing occasional columns for *Parent & preschooler*.

Finally, the "Health Corner" focuses on hearing and reminds us that early tests of hearing are crucial. Sandy Whiteside gives us some thoughts on pet adoption and some special resources for potential pet owners.

Happy Earth Day to all!

Neala Schwartzberg

Growing Your Garden From A to Z

In celebration of Earth Day why not plant an alphabet garden with your youngsters? Or, select plants that spell out your child's name. Or any special (and secret) message. It's fun and educational.

Azalea: Easily grown shrub in all but the desert regions of the U.S. It has many different color forms and is easily attainable.

Balloon flower: A colorful perennial (comes back every year) for the garden. Originally from Orient but adaptable to most of the U.S. Its botanical name is Platycodon. When it flowers the petals actually make it look a bit like a balloon.

Crocus: Early spring flowering bulb planted in the Fall. Make special note of the spot and watch the excitement of the kids when they see the little "marbles" that they planted in the Fall burst into color. This is probably the best bulb for children. They only need to plant it 2 or 3 inches in the ground. If your ground is sandy the kids can push them into the ground without any digging. Crocuses grow nicely in sand, although you can apply fertilizer.

Daisy: Colorful, easy, and grown anywhere in the US. I call it "he or she loves me or loves me not" plant because generations have pulled off the petals one at a time to find out if someone loves them, or loves them not.

Elephant Ear: A tropical bulb that adds wonder to the garden with its fantastically fast grow, its leaves growing to more than two feet long. Its botanical name is Colocasia Esculenta. It grows in any well-drained soil.

Fern: One of the oldest plants on the planet found on all the continents of the world with the possible exception of Antarctica. I've even found some growing in Alaska. It has interesting early spring growth with its fiddleheads (baby leaves) emerging from the ground. Many of these fiddleheads are edible and have been used in salads as a delicacy. Check with your garden nursery to find out if your plant is edible. As with mushrooms, you are better off not eating any you find in the wild.

Gourd: This is one of my favorites for children. Gourds are members of the cucumber family so they will need a lot of room, but it is worth it. Buy mixed gourd seeds in the Spring. When the gourds are harvested later that fall you will be amazed at the shapes produced. You should have penguins, swans, and whatever your imagination affords you. These gourds can be painted or decorated with ribbons. When dried they can also be made into bird houses.

Hyacinth: Spring flowering bulb with a fabulous scent. I like to plant them in specially designed transparent glass jars, found in most garden centers, which will allow youngsters to see the formations of the root system. It's amazing how much a plant produces underground.

Iris: Comes as bulbs or roots. Try the bulb types as children can handle them easily and they are reliable bloomers.

Jadeplant (Crassula): This is a great indoor plant for people who don't have much space. It makes a wonderful centerpiece for an indoor miniature garden with small cacti and other succulent plants (plants with fleshy or "juicy" leaves which store water). Make sure to choose nonspiny cactus.

Kalanchoe: A small succulent which can be used in the miniature garden. It can usually be found in plant stores, even supermarkets, especially during the winter months.

Lily: Large flowering bulbous plant. What I like about lilies, besides their great fragrance, is their rapid growth in the Spring. This is a good plant to use for encouraging children's measurement skills. Have your child make a growth chart and record the height, and rate of growth on a weekly basis.

Mimosa pudica: A wonderful plant for the indoors. When the foliage is touched the leaves temporarily curl up tightly. Children will demonstrate this to everyone who visits the house.

Narcissus: Children love to plant bulbs. Digging a hole and planting something in it is like hiding a treasure. The range of colors and sizes of Narcissus (Daffodils) are enormous. Fertilizer is a good idea, but don't put bulb food under the bulbs. It will burn the emerging roots.

Oxalis: Perhaps the best time to buy this plant is around St. Patrick's Day as this is the famous four-leaf-clover in Irish folklore. But it's wonderful at any time of year for good luck.

Primrose: An old-time, spring-blooming plant. Easy to grow in the shade and found everywhere even in your local supermarket.

Rock Garden: Get 4 or 5 rocks, some small plants and you have a rock garden. well almost. Rock gardens work best with plants that are not too aggressive and don't grow over one another. One of the things that makes this a great garden for kids is that the plants are kid size (small) and your can fit in a great variety. Here is the chance to give your child an "entire garden" to plant, care for, and be responsible for its well being. Sempervivium and Yarrow (see below) are great plants for rock gardens.

Sempervivium: Best known as Hens and Chicks because the plant produces offshoots that

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are exact replicas of the original single rosette. It is also known as Live Forever. Live Forever comes from the European superstition that if you plant a sempervivium on the roof of your house neither fire or lightning would ever harm it. This is also one of the best plants for the rock garden as it can survive almost anywhere, even in a rock crevice without soil.

Tomato: One of the easiest vegetable plants to grow from seed. A plant which demonstrates to children that the primary reason we grow plants is for food.

Umbellifer: Herbs mainly grown for food. The best example of an umbellifer is the carrot. It is always fascinating to see that for some plants main growth occurs under the soil.

Venus Fly Trap: This is a fascinating insectivorous (insect-eating) plant which needs to be grown in a terrarium, which can be as simple as a clear Tupperware jar. You can fool the plant into closing by lightly touching the inner spines with a pencil point, mimicking the process of a fly landing on the plant.

Wildflowers: You may be thinking that you can go out into the woods and dig up some interesting plants. I highly discourage this for several reasons. First, you might introduce something into your garden that might become a weed which can't be contained or eliminated. Second, and more important, you could introduce a poisonous plant into your garden. So, leave the wildflowers in the woods. Instead buy a package of wildflower mix in the plant store and bring the woods safely into your garden.

X Garden: This is the opportunity to use plants as a type of topiary: using herbs to form a garden in the shape of an X. Plant one row with the herb Thyme and another row with Rosemary, crossing the first to create the letter X. You can use almost any herb, just make sure that the ultimate height of each herb is roughly the same.

Yarrow: Its botanical name is Achillea. This is a plant that can stand a lot of neglect. It can also be grown in the rock garden, and used for dried bouquets in the winter.

Zinnia: One of the most easily grown annuals of many different colors and sizes. It grows easily although it prefers a sunny location.

Bill Brown is a botanist and retired elementary school teacher. He is also a consultant on gardens, garden design, and plants as well as a frequent lecturer on wildflowers. Email him at:
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Earth Day 2002

Earth Day is celebrated on April 22nd each year and this year is the 32nd anniversary of the modern environmental movement. This Earth Day, parents and educators can help children understand the importance of protecting our environment through the use of some creative and fun activities.

☼ **Nature Collections**

Collect a variety of natural items such as sea shells, dried wheat, grasses and flowers, sand, rocks, pebbles, bark, twigs, and small branches. Also provide glue and foam trays and let children use their imaginations in creating natural landscapes.

☼ **Earth's Colors**

Using red cabbage, beets, celery tops, carrot tops, and vinegar, adults should simmer each vegetable separately in water, drain, saving the colored liquids. Mix one tablespoon of white vinegar into each liquid and allow to cool. Let children use the natural colors and brushes to paint a piece of white cotton fabric. Allow to dry and hang as an Earth Day flag.

☼ **Earth Clay**

Using 2 cups of sawdust, 1 cup of wallpaper paste, and water, mix the paste and sawdust, adding water slowly (a little at a time) and mixing until you have a thick dough. Help children model their favorite part of nature (a butterfly, a tree, a bird, a fish) and allow to dry overnight. Then paint and display.

☼ **Earth Science**

Gather four large jars with lids, dirt, sand, salt, gravel, and a large pitcher of warm water. Pour warm water into each jar and have the kids slowly add one of the elements to each jar, cover it tightly, and shake the jar. Let them predict what will happen in each jar. Which of the elements will dissolve, which will sink to the bottom? Let the children think up other elements to test in their earth jars.

☼ **Thought Games**

Day-Time - Night-Time: Have kids describe what happens on the earth during the day and during the night. What do they like best about both times? What do they do during the day and during the night? Urge them to use all of their senses when describing.

Earth View: Ask kids to pretend they are birds flying high over the earth. Let them take turns telling what they see. Encourage them to use as much detail as possible. What do they encounter in the sky as they are flying?

The Grandfather Tree: Go to a lumber yard and find some horizontal slices of tree trunks. Have children count the rings to find out the age of the tree. This is a nice way to teach children about the concept of age and is a good counting exercise as well.

These activities are adapted, with permission, from Jenny Wanderscheid of ChildFun, Inc.; P.O. Box 1173; Mankato, Mn 56002-1173 Phone and Fax: 1-507-625-1124 **or see her website at: http://www.childfun.com**

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

THE PET STOP

Spring is a good time for pet adoption. The choice of a pet is a crucial matter and one that must never be taken lightly. Dogs are a very popular pet so this month we will discuss dogs - but the principles we talk about can be used when considering any species of pet.

All puppies are cute. Beware of making a rash decision based on the "cuteness factor" alone. Each dog breed (and mixes of each breed) has distinctive qualities for better or worse. You would be wise to learn as much as you can before making a commitment that may last for the next fifteen years. A dog can be a wonderful part of your life or a terrible mistake. It is good to know that bad choices can be avoided.

The best advice I have ever received about adopting a dog is to "do your homework." Do some serious research before falling in love with an adorable pup. You need to learn about dog breeds. Discover which ones would best fit your temperament and your family's life style. There are many books and magazines about dogs and the characteristics of each breed. One of the best books around is called ***Paws to Consider: Choosing the Right Dog for You and Your Family*** by Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson; Warner Books, Inc.; New York; 1999; Hardcover $22.95.

This book is recommended reading if you are thinking about adding a dog to your family. The authors, Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson, are experienced dog trainers. They have written an informative and candid guide on both the pros and cons of nearly one hundred breeds of dog. Unlike most books of this kind, Kilcommons and Wilson have not categorized the breeds according to the usual breed profiles such as the sporting group, the hound group, or the terrier group. Instead, chapters are devoted to learning about which dogs would best fit into various life styles. What dogs are best for people who have to leave their dogs at home while they work a 9-5 job? Which breeds need great amounts of exercise? What dogs fit well into city living? What breeds make the best indoor companions or watchdogs? Which breeds are low-shed, and thus, appropriate for allergy sufferers? Of course, there is a chapter devoted to those breeds recommended for families as well.

One of the most interesting chapters is called "Good Dogs are Hard to Find." In this category, there are some of the most wonderful dogs ever, but due to their great popularity, over-breeding for profit has done great harm to these breeds. Cocker Spaniels, for example, should be delightful companion dogs but, due to greedy over-breeding, there are many Cockers with serious health problems and aggressive behavior problems. Even the beloved Labrador Retriever and Golden Retriever now fall into this category of "buyer beware."

Paws to Consider also discusses the origins of each canine category which explains why each breed has distinctive characteristics and how those qualities will fit into your lifestyle. Are you into bear hunting? Then a chow chow may be just the dog for you. Will you be searching for escaped felons? A bloodhound will be an excellent choice. The book asks prospective dog owners to be very realistic about just what they want from a dog.

The book also covers genetic health problems, exercise requirements, temperaments, and potentially problem dogs with aggressive tendencies that are inappropriate for family life. Reading *Paws to Consider* will provide helpful research in your search for the right dog for your family.

Some other recommended books are:

📖 ***Your Purebred Puppy: A Buyer's Guide*** by Michele Lowell; Henry Holt and Co.; New York; 1990; Paperback $10.95

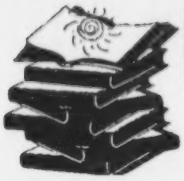
📖 ***The Perfect Match: A Dog Buyer's Guide*** by Chris Walkowicz; Howell Book House; 1996; Paperback $14.95

📖 ***Mutts: America's Dogs*** by Brian Kilcommons and Michael Capuzzo; Warner Books; New York; 1996

➢ **Special Note**: When considering what breed or mixed breed canine to add to your family, do not forget to learn about training your dog or puppy. Every dog will benefit from positive training and you and your family will be rewarded with a happy, well-behaved companion. There are many good training books that use positive reinforcement as the major training technique.

📖 ***What All Good Dogs Should Know: The Sensible Way to Train*** by Jack Volhard and Melissa Bartlett; Simon and Schuster Macmillian Co.; New York; 1991; Paperback $10. A delightful and simple to understand book with lots of illustrative cartoons.

Sandra Whiteside, CSW



Library Resources

Read Aloud Books

Books for Parents

📖 ***Bringing the Story Home: The complete guide to storytelling for parents*** by Lisa Lipkin; W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.; New York, 2000; Hardcover and softcover. Lisa Lipkin, author of our feature article, has also written this marvelous guide to story-telling which goes beyond the techniques of reading aloud into ways for adults to invent and encourage children to invent stories. No matter where you are or what your family is doing ... there's a story there somewhere. She also discusses specific kinds of stories that parents may want to develop everything from stories that help children express their feelings to impromptu stories where parents set the scene and the kids take over. Finally, there are complete stories for parents to use as a starting point for their own innovative efforts.

📖 ***Oodles of Storytelling Ideas for the Early Childhood Classroom: A handbook*** by Naomi Leithold; Simply Storytelling; Skokie, IL, 2002; Softcover $7.95 (phone: 877-417-8679 or visit www.simplystorytelling.com. More a booklet than a book, this 15-page publication is chock full of creative story-telling ideas. What would a bird say if it could talk? Ways to use puppets. Jump start your imagination.

📖 ***Pete Seeger's Storytelling Book*** by Pete Seeger & Paul Dubois Jacobs; Harvest/ Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, 2001; Softcover $14.00. You might know Pete Seeger as the folk-singer/writer icon. Certainly the man knows he way around words and stories. The book is a compilation of stories that are perfect for reading aloud, giving parents opportunities to act, emote, bring the words to life, and change the story to suit their children and themselves. Each section is introduced by a section describing why Seeger included the stories. There are stories from his father, from lullabies and songs, American history, and more. Not all will be appropriate for preschoolers.

📖 ***Reading Magic: Why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever*** by Mem Fox; Harvest/Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, 2001; Softcover $12.00. Mem Fox certainly knows about reading to children. She's the author of numerous books for children, including those reviewed in Parent & preschooler. She's turned her ability to write and beguile towards parents with this book on why and how to read to children, filled with inventive suggestions, warmth and wonder.

📖 ***Read to Me: Raising kids who love to read*** by Bernice E. Cullinan; Scholastic Books; New York, 2000; Softcover $6.95. A gentle book for parents filled with advice, anecdotes and activities. Goes from infancy to pre-adolescents.

Books to Read to Children

📖 ***Book! Book! Book!*** by Deborah Bruss; illustrated by Tiphanie Beeke; Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic Press); New York, 2001; Hardcover, $15.95. The animals on the farm are lonely. They miss the children who have gone back to school. So they go to the library in town. But the librarian can't understand any of them, until the chicken clucked a sound much like the word Book. Lots of animals sounds to make in an engaging and offbeat story.

📖 ***A Mile from Ellington Station*** by Tim Egan; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 2001; Hardcover $15.00. Marley is an extraordinary dog and when he becomes to live at Ellington Lodge he amazes all the town. He paints, he cooks, he wins at checkers and more. It's clear he's not a normal dog and the folks become nervous and a bit scared. The book presents an important lesson and ends happily. Lots of dialogue for parents to read aloud with feeling.

📖 ***Mrs. Spitzer's Garden*** by Edith Pattou; illustrated by Tricia Tusa; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 2001; Hardcover $16.00. A lovely metaphorical book about growing flowers and children. Mrs. Spitzer is a teacher whose plants grow into flowers, each with a face and each an individual.

📖 ***Parents in the Pigpen, Pigs in the Tub*** by Amy Ehrlich and Steven Kellogg; Puffin Books; New York; 1997; Softcover $5.99. One by one the animals move into the farmer's house. Chaos results. So, the family moves into the barn. Eventually everyone ends back where they started. The good-natured humor is perfect for reading aloud.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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NEWSLETTER

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Volume 17 Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* April - 2002

La Guía del Narrador Para Leer en Voz Alta

Todos los veranos, cuando los grillos se congregan cerca de mi ventana y escucho el tintineo distante del camión de los helados, soy transportada al barrio de mi juventud. Gigi, mi prima, vivía en las misma calle y nos pasamos nuestra infancia subiendo y bajando la colina que separaba nuestras casas.

Han pasado mucho años desde que nos quedábamos despiertas toda la noche riéndonos y contando chismes cuando ella se quedaba a dormir en mis casa, pero hay ciertos recuerdos que simplemente no se borran: las sabanas frescas estampadas de flores en la cama para huéspedes en la que yo siempre dormía en su casa; las tazas blancas llenas de cereales y de avena que nos esperaba en las mañanas; y la absoluta alegría que sentíamos cada vez que nuestra tía Blanca nos leía antes de apagar la luz.

Mi tía solo nos leía libros del Dr. Seuss. De hecho, no recuerdo haber visto ningún otro tipo de libros en la habitación de mi prima. Sin embargo, no nos importaba escuchar *El Gato en el Sombrero* o *Huevos Verdes y Jamón* constantemente. Aprendimos las rimas de memoria y las recitábamos junto con mi tía. Esta repetición me reconfortaba, como un viejo amigo cuya conducta era previsible pero nunca aburrida. Pero esas noches de lecturas en voz alta fueron más que una simple entretención. Provocaron nuestra imaginación, nos dieron un lenguaje alegre y nos dejaron con amor para los cuentos. Nos demostró que el mundo se extiende más allá de nuestros jardines, y nos enseño sobre las infinitas posibilidades de la vida.

De *El Gato en el Sombrero* aprendimos a suspender el cinismo creyendo en peces que bailan, volantines que se escapan, y hombres de pelo azul que se llaman *Cosa Uno y Cosa Dos*. Era aceptable expresarse lúdicamente, poniéndose grandes sombreros sueltos, usar palabras absurdas, dejar que una maquina mágica pasara por la sala. Pero también aprendimos que cada alternativa tiene una consecuencia. Volverse loca con un felino espontáneo es entretenido. Ordenar el revoltijo que deja es más complicado.

Es maravilloso ser un narrador y crear cautivantes cuentos para compartir con los niños, pero para las personas que no se sienten bien inventando cuentos, o cuentos que sabemos de memoria, leerle a nuestros niños confiere beneficios reales. Sabemos que es un hecho que leyéndoles a los niños les ayuda a aumentar su vocabulario, mejora las habilidades para leer y escribir, estimula la creatividad y vincula al adulto y el niño. La Comisión de Lectura, financiada por el Departamento de Educación recalcó que la actividad más importante para la acumulación de conocimiento para el éxito es leer en voz alta.

Pero hay otros beneficios menos obvios pero igualmente profundos de leer en voz alta que pocas

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veces son mencionados por los investigadores. Escuchar cuentos forma nuestras vidas, nos ayuda a entender nuestro pasado y nuestras experiencias presentes. También nos alienta a imaginarnos posibilidades para el futuro. Daniel Taylor, un professor inglés y autor del libro *The Healing Power of Stories* (Doubleday, 1996), sugiere que nuestra capacidad de vernos a nosotros mismos como algo mejor de lo que somos en el presente depende de estas habilidades para crear cuentos. Esta visión de nuestras posibilidades nace del poder de nuestra imaginación; de poder ver y creer cuentos del futuro en los cuales nuestras vidas son ricas y tienen significado.

Por lo tanto, leer en voz alta no es solo para fortalecer la lectura de nuestros niños. Se trata de fortalecer sus habilidades para interpretar cuentos: dándoles tramas que puedan emular, héroes que puedan usar como modelos, villanos contra los cuales los niños pueden poner a prueba sus valores. Y los estarás ayudando a poner sus vidas en perspectiva. Jim Trelease, autor de *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (Penguin, 1982, 2001) ha sugerido que al llenar las cabezas de los niños con cuentos sobre las experiencias de otras personas, les permite decir "Si, a mi me pasó lo mismo. No estoy solo".

Al construir un hogar rico en cuentos, no solo se divertirán, fortalecerán los lazos familiares y desarrollarán la imaginación de sus niños, sino que también estarás construyendo un valioso marco en el cual los niños pueden vivir.

Como narrador profesional, he aprendido algunas valiosas técnicas y sugerencias durante los últimos 15 años en que le he estado contando cuentos a los niños. Intente las iguientes recomendaciones que están diseñadas a darle vida a su narración en voz alta mientras inspiras a tus niños a que las soliciten repetidamente.

Haga de esto una experiencia participativa. Antes de empezar a leer, puedes involucrar a tus niños pidiéndoles que se pongan sus sombreros narrativos imaginarios y que los describan detalladamente. Hágales preguntas para ayudar este proceso.

No lea muy rápidamente. Lea lentamente cada palabra. Deténgase, gozando de la riqueza del lenguaje. Leer lentamente no disminuye el deleite de su niño. Todo lo contrario, entre más te detienes, ellos podrán visualizar mejor el cuento. ¿Mirarías rápidamente a la Mona Lisa o te pasarías un rato estudiándola? Maneja el lenguaje en el libro como un retrato visual. Cada palabra crea una nueva pincelada y una nueva imagen que tus niños pueden absorber. Es mejor solo leer una tercera parte del libro, teniendo tiempo para contestar las preguntas de los niños y gozar del lenguaje y de los personajes del libro, que apurarse a través del libro para poder terminarlo.

Da vuelta las paginas lentamente. Los niños necesitan mucho tiempo para poder digerir todo lo que está en la pagina. Quizás hayas completado la parte sobre el gallo rojo que cruza el camino, pero tu niño todavía estará mirando la línea amarilla en la mitad del camino, la pluma rara que se le cayó al gallo de la espalda, o el Jeep que está en el otro lado del camino, el niño está mirando todo esto en el lado derecho del dibujo y del manzano que se suspende sobre el niño que mira. Una manera de asegurarse que uno no está yendo muy rápido es pedirle al niño que dé vuelta la pagina. De esa manera tendrá una parte activa en el proceso de narración y dará vuelta la pagina después de haber digerido todo lo que quiere ver.

Resista la tentación de interrumpir el cuento para dar información y vocabulario. Recuerde que se trata de compartir un cuento con su niño y no de conseguir un mejor puntaje en lectura. Es muy importante no interrumpir un cuento en la mitad para hacer un pregunta como "Ese cuento ocurre en Miami. ¿Te acuerdas donde queda Miami en el mapa"? Nos hemos entusiasmado tanto con la verdad objetiva que nos olvidamos que en le mundo de los cuentos, las verdades emocionales tienen un papel igualmente importante. Si detienes el cuento para dar datos, interrumpes el vínculo emocional del niño con los personajes y la acción. Esto no quiere decir que no debieras responder a las preguntas que te hacen tus niños mientras lees. Pero dales espacio para que puedan analizar el cuento de su propia manera y llegar a sus propias conclusiones y observaciones.

No te preocupes demasiado sobre los detalles del cuento. Mi filosofía es, si no te gusta, cámbialo. Si la prosa de un libro no es lo uficientemente rica para mi, yo la adorno con adjetivos. Si un cuento tiene un personaje detestable, lo hago más simpático, quizás a través de la voz que le doy o cambiando un poco la trama. Los libros de cuentos son solamente esqueletos. Los adornos y cambios que les

das durante la lectura crean el cuerpo completo del cuento.

Quizás te guste el uso del lenguaje y el ritmo de este autor y creas que cambiarlo destruye la integridad del original. Si es así, no lo hagas. Nadie quiere que alteres algo que aprecias. Pero hay un enfoque que puedes considerar que es leer el libro exactamente como está escrito varias veces hasta que tus niños estén familiarizados con la versión original. Entonces cuénteles que es el momento de divertirse diciéndoles, "Me encanta este libro, pero creo que el cuento debiera tener un final distinto. Cambiemos el final usando el lenguaje y ritmo del autor."

No use el libro como amenaza. Siga las sugerencias del promotor de lectura en voz alta Jim Trelease y evite decir como las siguientes, "Si no limpias tu habitación, no te voy a noche"! Apenas su nino se de cuenta que has convertido el libro en ama, cambria su actitud sobre los lectura en voz alta Jim Trelease y evite decir como las siguientes, ¡"Si no limpias tu habitación, no te voy a contar un cuento esta noche"! Apenas su niño se de cuenta que has convertido el libro en arma, cambiará su actitud sobre los libros de positiva a negativa. No trate de leerles cuentos que no le gustan. Tu frialdad se notará, incluso si la escondes.

Aprovéchese de los dibujos. Maneja cada objeto en una ilustración como un lugar donde se esconde un cuento. Pídale a sus niños que se metan en el dibujo y que se conviertan en uno de los objetos del dibujo y que describan la experiencia. O cree un cuento totalmente nuevo basado en la lámina.

Sustituya palabras tontas. Si has leído un cierto libro varias veces y tu hijo ya está familiarizado con el texto, intente sustituir una palabra necia por la verdadera. Por ejemplo, quizás estés leyendo "El patito chiquito no puede no dar"... Inevitablemente su hijo lo corregirá y se reirá mientras lo hace. Es una manera maravillosas de mantener su atención mientras se desarrollan sus habilidades para escuchar.

Module su voz. El más pequeño cambio en tu voz puede causar un ataque de risas durante las lecturas nocturnas. Intente cambiar la voz de acuerdo a los personajes e incidentes en el libro. ¿Por que no estirar la voz cada vez que a Pinocho le crece la nariz, alargando las palabras, o baje la cabeza, bostece y lea lentamente cuando Winnie empieza a quedarse dormido? Recuerde que hay muchas más maneras de cambiar la voz que simplemente subiéndola y bajándola.

Préstele atención a la velocidad y al ritmo. Acelerar y disminuir la velocidad durante la lectura puede ser una herramienta extremadamente poderosa para captar a su audiencia. Pero solamente es efectiva si se usan los cambio de ritmo con discreción. Elija lugares donde tiene sentido hacerlo, como en las partes en que el personaje tiene altibajos emocionales, durante cualquier tipo de movimiento, como un automóvil, tren, o durante un viaje en avión, o durante los periodos lentos del personaje como cuando está durmiendo o flojeando. Cambiar el ritmo no solo estimulará a su audiencia y también evitará que tu te aburras, especialmente si esta es la milésima vez en que has leído el mismo cuento.

Use silencios. Los narradores profesionales usan el silencio para manipular a sus públicos y tu también debieras hacerlo. Elige una parte del texto a la cual quieres llamarde la atención y en vez de leerla de la manera común y corriente, haz una pausa, y quédate en completo silencio por unos segundos, antes de seguir con el cuento. Si verdaderamente quieres crear suspenso hace contacto visual con los niños durante esos silencios. Te asombraras de cuan metidos están tus niños en el cuento.

No dejes de leer en voz alta a tus niños una vez que aprenden a leer, Leer en voz alta debiera continuar lo más tiempo posible, incluso después que tu niña a aprendido a leer. No solamente ayudará a tus niños a sobresalir en sus habilidades matemáticas y verbales, sino que también creará un vínculo especial con tu hija.

Lisa Lipkin es una narradora profesional y autora de "Bringing the Story Home: The Complete Guide to Storytelling for Parents," W. W. Norton, 1990. Recientemente ha sido publicado en forma de libro de bolsillo. Para más información, contáctela en Lisastories@aol.com

Translated By
TIKAL Translations
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NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Illustrations
Susan Eaddy
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
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Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
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Volume 17, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* May - 2002

Raising Kids Who Know How to Eat

There's a paradox in the way most of us eat. It's been part of our lives for so long we probably don't even realize it, or perhaps we do but then shrug and move on. We love large portions and we always think we should eat less.

All-you-can-eat buffets, oversized muffins, half-pound burgers, giant orders of fries, and a "finish all the food on your plate" mentality are clearly at war with our national obsession with thin bodies and healthy eating. Although we don't appear to notice it, this contradiction has put adults into a difficult position. We eat, then fret about our weight, our eating habits, and our lack of self-control, perhaps consuming a box of low fat (but high in sugar) cookies in the process.

It's bad enough that we do this to ourselves, but it is becoming clear that parents' obsession with body size, eating, and dieting results in problems for our children, even our preschoolers. The mother of a six-year-old recently asked if it was a good idea to bring her chubby daughter to Weight Watchers. Some pediatricians shake their heads when looking at infants who are, according to the charts, too heavy for their size.

This concern is not without some basis. Excessive weight gain is the result of too little activity and too great an intake of calories. Childhood obesity can track into adulthood along with the health risks.

Parents Sometimes Teach Dysfunctional Eating

What we do in the name of a cure creates, even increases the problem. It turns out that parents can inadvertently teach their kids dysfunctional eating, even creating the higher levels of body fat that they are trying to avoid.

Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine found that

parents of three- to five-year-olds who rigorously watched their own diets had children who gained the least weight. But parents who combined this dietary restraint with bouts of poorly controlled eating had children who gained and gained and gained.

Why did this happen? Kids learn how to eat from their parents. The behavior parents modeled alternated between "I have to watch my weight and diet very carefully," and "Oh my gosh, I can't believe I ate the whole pie."

"Parents practicing both of these behaviors may unconsciously undermine their child's autonomy in food choices," said Maggie Hood, MPH, lead author of the study. Children need to use their internal cues of hunger, and fullness and satiety to guide their eating. "Parents who exhibit alternating control and loss of control are probably guided in their own eating by more external than internal factors. These behaviors may be passed on to their children, suppressing

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their child's ability to regulate his or her own dietary intake." Clearly, these children and adults have lost their ability to use hunger and satiety to regulate their food intake.

Research reported in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (Birch & Fisher, 2000) now further suggests that too much restrictive control over children's eating, even without that binge cycle, reduces children's ability to regulate their own food intake. These youngsters don't learn to eat when hungry and stop when they're full. Instead, they are vulnerable to the lure of snacks, eating more candy, ice cream, pretzels etc. when available.

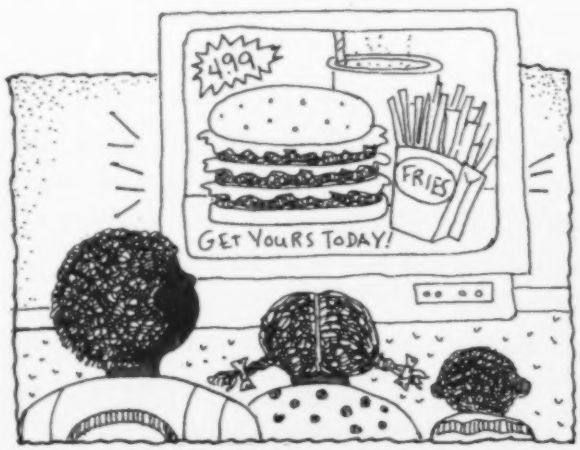
The researchers found that mothers who thought their young daughters were overweight were more likely to try to restrict their eating. But the more mothers restricted their daughters' food intake the more these youngsters ate when given the opportunity, even though they had just finished lunch and said they weren't hungry. Thus a unhealthy cycle was created. The mothers perceived their daughters as heavy, restricted their food intake which then made it more likely the daughters would snack when given the chance, and increase their weight gain.

The underlying problem is that the children haven't learned to eat and stop eating in response to internal cues. Instead, their food intake is dependent on aspects of the environment. In the process their ability to notice and use their bodies' cues for hunger and satiety are lost, or overrun by the external cues telling them what and how much they should be eating.

Environment Makes a Difference

➢ *Messages from Television*

When it comes to messages from the outside world, the deck is clearly stacked against healthy eating. If you have any doubts, sit down with your children and watch the television commercials. What products are advertised? How many are for snack foods and heavily sugared cereals?



"You are up against a well-funded culture that condones high fat, high sugar, large portion fast food," says Ronald Marino, D.O., M.P.H. and Associate Chairman of Pediatrics, Winthrop University Hospital. Advertising is powerful. Kids grow up wanting high sugar cereals and drinks, and high fat snacks.

➢ *Portion Size Counts*

How much food is on the plate makes a difference in how much children (and adults) eat. In one study conducted at Pennsylvania State University researchers found that five-year-old children ate more when they were offered larger portions, although the 3 1/2 year olds ate the same regardless of how much they were offered.

"Young children have a natural capacity to self-regulate their food intake," writes the authors Barbara Rolls, PhD, Dianne Engell, PhD, and Leann Birch, PhD, "but our study indicates that sometime between the age of 3 and 5 years of age, they learn to ignore their internal hunger signals and respond instead to other cues, including portion size." For these children offering large portions can promote overeating and overweight. "Learned behavior of ignoring internal hunger cues has very early roots," writes these authors.

➢ *Day-to-Day variability*

Children's eating also shows a variability that can distress caregivers. Adults believe that people should eat about the same amount of food at each meal, but children are often inconsistent in what and how much they eat, consuming large portions of food at lunch one day and very little at lunch on another day. As a result, parents come to believe that children just don't know how to eat without adult supervision or intervention. This parental concern is unfounded. Although children's meal-to-meal energy intake is somewhat erratic, children are generally consistent in the total amount of calories they consume during 24-hour periods.

➢ *It's also how much energy is expended*

We also know that genes play a role in body type, and there isn't too much that can be done about a genetic predisposition. A tendency towards chubby thighs, stomach rolls may go from parent to child simply because they are built that way, and have a particular metabolism. "Kids tend to assume the form of their parents," says Dr. Marino. "However, that form can be modified by two things; what one eats, and what one does – diet and activity level."

It used to be that playing outside with friends was far more interesting that the diversions offered in the house. But today the situation is reversed. Playing outside with friends, riding bikes, playing ball seems to have lost out to computers and television and indoor entertainment. "Studies clearly show the direct and linear correlation between hours of TV consumption and obesity. TV and computers

enhance the sedentary lifestyle," says Dr. Marino.

What To Do

➢ *Encourage your children to pay attention to their internal cues, and give your youngsters some autonomy in their eating.* According to nutritionist and social worker Ellyn Satter (Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family (Kelcy Press, 1999), *"parents are responsible for the what, when, and where of feeding. Children are responsible for the how much and whether of eating."*

This means that parents get to decide what to serve at meals but the children get to decide how much to eat, if anything. "What," you may be thinking, "my child wouldn't eat anything at all!" Well, that's not really true. Children will not starve if there is healthy food available. But panicky parents have been known to cook up special meals, cajole, bribe, even threaten reluctant eaters. And this isn't healthy eating. "I have concluded from my clinical experience, and research supports my conclusions, that if you try to get children to eat more than they want, they become revolted by food and undereat when they get the chance. If you try to get children to eat less than they want, they become preoccupied with food and overeat when they get the chance," writes Satter.

Offer a complete family meal with several healthy foods. Then, let your youngster select what and how much to eat. This is a win-win situation because your child feels in control of eating and all the choices are healthy. And you don't have to cook up special dishes to please a picky eater either.

➢ *Introduce new foods gradually, and with patience.*

Your family is sitting down to dinner. Today's vegetable is string beans. Your youngster has never seen them before and immediately pushes them away. This is a very common reaction, and the way you react can make a crucial difference.

Youngsters do not readily accept new food (unless it happens to be sweet). Many parents, in an attempt to avoid food hassles, either forgo introducing a new food, or engage in bribery.

Using highly desirable foods as a bribe backfires. They make the less favored food even more unattractive as the child thinks "they have to bribe me to eat this? Must be really bad. Bribing also reduces children's ability to regulate their own food energy intake.

Many a child's initial rejection can be changed. The solution is to be gently persistent, presenting the new food a number of times. Experts suggest a schedule that includes two opportunities to try the food each week. This won't happen instantly. It may take as many as ten presentations before you see a change in your child's attitude.

You can also set up the expectation that your child will taste new foods. Generations of children have been raised

Health at Any Size

In the obsession with thinness that grips our culture today problems like overweight, eating disorders, and dysfunctional eating are increasing at alarming rates, and they are severely affecting children at younger and younger ages.

As these problems claim more and more youngsters, it's time for a new tactic. "Health at Any Size" is an approach that deals with the weight and eating crisis in a better way. It affirms that beauty, health and strength come in all sizes, that good health is not defined by body weight, but by the state of wellness: physical, mental, and social well-being, and it results from a healthy lifestyle.

This new philosophy leaves restrictive thinking behind. It declares that everyone can be healthy, regardless of size.

Dysfunctional eating, hazardous weight loss, eating disorders, and size prejudice are all part of the same problem and are all influenced by our drive for thinness at any cost. Simplistic solutions won't work.

How can we gradually shift to healthier habits that will last a lifetime? "Health at Any Size" suggests the following:

*(1) **Eat well**. Eating has two aspects; what and how we eat. For healthy nourishment choose fruits and vegetables, whole grains, meats and meat alternates, and milk which give a good balance of the many nutrients we need for health and energy. Eating moderately, an amount that feels right, reminds us to avoid extremes, neither undereating or overeating. It means listening to our bodies so we eat when hungry and stop when satisfied. If we encourage children to do this, trusting their natural tendencies, we can prevent many eating and weight problems.*

*(2) **Live actively**. Help children celebrate activity as a natural and joyful part of their lives. Fitness feels good. Provide plenty of time for active play, especially outside. Share the benefits by having active fun together as a family. Be a good role model by keeping active in your own way, every day. Live actively for better health and because it's a great and wonderful way to live.*

*(3) **Feel good about yourself and others**. Celebrate and enjoy every child's special traits and talents. Instead of struggling against a child's natural weight, parents and health professionals need to recognize and work with it. A change in attitude toward acceptance can be liberating. It frees a child (and parents) from waiting to be thin, and helps that child move on with health-centered changes that make his or her life infinitely better.*

Children grow at different rates and through numerous spurts, so it's important that adults not overreact. Reassure youngsters that their growth is normal, and expect them to grow into their natural size.

The goal of "Health at Any Size" is the well-being of children and adults, furthering their physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health.

➢ Adapted with permission from "Children and Teens Afraid to Eat" by Frances M. Berg; Healthy Weight Network; Hettinger, ND (701-567-2646, http://www.healthyweight.net, 3rd edition, 2001 paperback $19.95.

with the exhortation to "just taste it." But the key is to begin this policy before youngsters start the terrible twos.

➢ *Avoid the "Clean Plate" Rule.*

Then there's the "clean plate" policy. It also backfires, undermining children's ability to know when they are hungry and when they are full. Focusing on cleaning their plates makes children much less responsive to their own bodies' cues of hunger and satiety.

What else helps? Seeing others, preferably peers, who seem to actually enjoy the new food. Don't discount the importance of the littlest one in the family watching parents and older siblings enjoying the new food.

Presenting the new food in a pleasant atmosphere also helps. When mealtimes have become a power struggle, don't expect your child to welcome a new food. It will just become another battle ground.

You can also try introducing the food as a snack, or in a new way. Cooked string beans for dinner not a hit? Try providing them as a snack, paired with a familiar food.

➢ *If you don't want your child to eat lots of chips, candy, and ice cream, don't keep them in the house.*

Children (and adults) eat what's available. If you keep lots of ice cream in the freezer, bags of potato chips, candy, and cookies in the cabinet, don't be surprised if your family eats them. It's just too available. Instead keep fruit and small-size portions of snacks.

And what's wrong with keeping ice cream as a family treat rather than a standard every-night dessert? One of the pleasures in my family has been a trip to the store for sundaes, or picking up the makings for special desserts and enjoying the process of putting them together and eating them. Usually accompanied by laughter, talk, sounds of happy eating "oh this is sooo good."

Finally, Satter reminds us "What ever happened to enjoying food? Food will nourish you and make you strong and give you joy." Eat, with gusto, but also with awareness.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is the editor of "Parent & preschooler Newsletter" and a freelance writer on parenting and children's health.

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Dear Reader ...

We have a love-hate relationship with food. We enjoy food, but we find eating is a mine-field. Don't eat this, watch out for that. We even have coined the term food-police for those who would shake their fingers at our eating habits.

Of course, there's a reason for this. We do know that healthy eating is...healthy. But food isn't the culprit. When my son was a roly-poly toddler the doctor looked at his weight chart and advised me to cut down on the junk food. But I never did (and still don't) keep it in the house. I'll happily eat those dense premium ice creams, or a cream cheese pound cake from the bakery. But I want those calories to count. If I'm going to eat empty calories they better be delicious. I want to enjoy every one of them.

My son simply loved food, and ate almost everything we put in front of him. Cereal, fruit, yogurt, omelettes, and more. And because it wasn't cake, cookies, and candy we never worried about it. In fact, we beamed at our healthy eater (even as we bought clothes in the "chubby" section of the store).

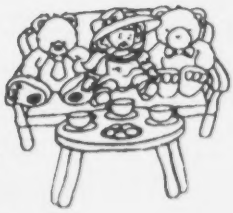
Food isn't the enemy. This month we focus on eating: how to eat when we are hungry, stop when we have eaten enough, and help our children learn this critical lesson. Dawn Barhyte's crafts, Research News, book reviews and more round out our issue. It's a good month. Eat hearty and with awareness.

Although we are an internationally read newsletter, the publication is produced and supported by local efforts and friends. Recently, we've had very good news. In fact, we've been going around smiling quite a lot. The reason is the generosity of long-time supporters of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center, Jane and Marty Schwartz, who are underwriting the production of *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*. We want to tell everyone how much we appreciate their support. They are truly our angels!

Happy May !

Neala Schwartzberg

Food for Thought ...



What's Advertised on Children's Television and How It Affects Children's Food Preferences

Children spend a lot of time in front of the television screen. Mixed in with the program content are commercial messages that, in a sense, underwrite the cost of producing and airing the program.

Although adults may dismiss them as just advertisements, and perhaps click the remote to move to another channel, our kids often see them as another interesting thing to watch. That, of course, is the goal of the advertiser. The other goal is to convince children that the product being advertised is one they should want to have.

It becomes important then, to see what our kids are watching and learn how it affects their ideas about what they want to eat.

If you haven't already watched television along with your youngster, you may want to sit down and take a look for yourself. But this is what the researchers found when they undertook to investigate what commercials our kids are watching.

One study looked at 16 hours of Saturday morning children's programming on four network channels and evaluated them for their content. Of the 353 commercials analyzed, 63% were for food products. But the products advertised were promoting a high-fat, low-fiber diet (Gamble & Cotugna, 1999).

This is certainly consistent with other research (e.g. Taras & Gage, 1995). Food advertisements are common on children's television and the foods advertised are high in fat, sugar and/or salt.

This isn't surprising, but think for a moment about the impact it has on your child deciding what she wants to eat when you walk through the aisles of the supermarket or what your son requests as a cereal or snack.

Researchers at Purdue University School of Consumer and Family Sciences (Lipscomb & Evers, 2001) investigated that question. Do television commercials affect food preferences of preschooers. The answer was "yes."

They showed kids a 30 minute video of animated shorts interrupted by either a segment on sea creatures or 30-second commercials for popular brands of juice, doughnuts, bread, toys etc. Some of the ads (for juice and sandwich bread) had multiple exposures, with the commercial repeated more than once in the tape.

After the children watched the videotape they were shown several pairs of products and asked which ones they wanted more. The researchers found that children preferred the products advertised more often in the video.

The food choices of these preschoolers were affected by the televised messages they had seen. This isn't always a negative. If children develop an interest in a brand of fruit juice (and let's make that 100% fruit juice and not a watered down but sugared-up fruit drink) parents may be delighted to switch their soda-drinking youngsters to a different beverage. Or, an interest in a low-sugar cereal to replace a currently favored high-sugar breakfast food.

What can parents do?

Make your children aware of the purpose of television advertising: to interest children in trying a particular product.

Help your children understand what constitutes a healthy diet, the role of different foods within that diet, and how to make wise food choices.

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And ...

Advertising to Children Through Books

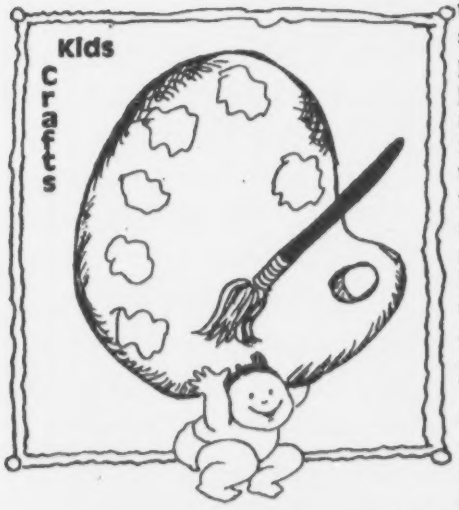
Our Position

We have noticed a trend in children's books to make the star of the book not an animal or a child, but a commercial product, with brands of candy, cereal, and more taking center stage. Sometimes these are counting books, based on the notion that children will enjoy counting familiar (and branded) foods more than fruits, balloons, or animals. This may or may not be true. We've never seen any research about this. What we do believe is that regardless of the context, writing a children's book around a product reinforces that brand name product and acts as a form of advertising.

Commercial advertising is all around us. At *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* we feel we need to draw the line somewhere. And we've drawn it for children's books. Books based on branded commercial products such as fast food, candies, and others will not be reviewed in our *Library Resources*. We don't believe parents should have to pay to bring commercials into their home and into the hands of their children.

Neala Schwartzberg, Ph.D.
Editor

Originally published in *Parent & preschooler* Vol.15 No.11. Dec.-2000

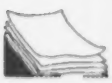


Kids Crafts

Celebrate Spring

Crafts have all the ingredients to captivate young children. As they experiment with materials kids will learn that, with some ingenuity, they have the power to make things happen.

Introduce kids to exciting new concepts through art and encourage them to think about the world in new ways while facilitating their natural curiosity. And if they take some detours along the way enjoy the journey, avoid "fixing" their work, the journey is what matters.



Tear Ups

You will need: Multi-color tissue paper; Small paintbrush; White paper; Water

Start by having your child tear the tissue paper into small shapes. Next have him arrange the tissue paper in the design of his choice, overlapping if he wishes. Then prompt him to paint over the tissue paper with the water, encouraging him to cover the entire sheet of paper. This process will allow the dye from the tissue paper to spread into an interesting motif and blend together creating a colorful mix. When the entire sheet of paper is covered, let dry for several hours. Once dry, ask your child to remove the scraps of tissue paper to discover the lovely kaleidoscope of colors beneath. He will be delighted by the magic of the discovery. Ask him to identify the colors aloud and encourage him to experiment.

Crafty Caterpillar

You will need: Cardboard egg carton; Pipe cleaner; Paint; Small brush; Black marker; Glitter; Scissors

Begin by discussing how caterpillars become beautiful butterflies and how they move by crawling. Start by cutting the egg carton in half lengthwise. This will form the caterpillar's body. Encourage your child to be inventive and use the paint, markers and glitter to decorate the caterpillar with patterns and designs. Have her determine which end will be the face and ask her to add eyes using the black marker. Then fold the pipe cleaner in half for the antennae. Glue or tape to the face. To extend the activity go to the library and check out books on caterpillars and their metamorphosis into butterflies.

Rainbow Rave

You will need: Assorted colors of crepe paper; Index Card; Stapler; Scissors

Begin by cutting the crepe paper in 2 inch by 2 feet lengths. Ask your child to choose 7 streamers, one for each color of the rainbow. Discuss rainbows and how they appear after a shower. Encourage her to identify the colors of a rainbow. Then staple the steamers together. Fold the index card and place the stapled end inside the index card. Staple through the card and the streamers. For safety cover the staples with tape. Play music and invite your child to hold their "rainbow" and dance in the wind.

Pastel Power

You will need: Inexpensive, light, wood picture frame; Paint in white and primary colors; Mismatched buttons; Seashells; White crafters glue; Picture of your child

Before starting remove the glass from the picture frame so your child can work safely. Begin by mixing the primary colored paint with white to create lovely spring colors. Your child will be fascinated by the transformation of colors and enjoy experimenting until he finds his favorite combination. Then have him paint the frame using any colors or pattern. Once dry ask him to glue the buttons or shells on the frame. Finally place your child's picture in the frame securing it to the cardboard with tape or glue. This makes a charming personalized gift.

Bookworm Handiwork

You will need: Cardboard or poster board; Scissors; Pencil; Ruler; Artwork or greeting cards; Glue

This activity makes terrific gifts. In fact, your child will certainly want to make more than one of these unique bookmarks. Remember to have her save at least one for herself. Each time she reads she'll feel pride using her special bookmark. Begin by asking her to choose a piece of art. Your assistance is needed to carefully measure out rectangles of 1-½" x 5" out of the cardboard and also the recycled artwork. Measure and mark with the pencil so there is a clear line. Under your supervision, ask her to cut on the line. Then glue the artwork to the cardboard. Allow to dry completely. Next, cut 2 rectangles from the contact paper. Remove the protective film from one piece and have her carefully place her artwork in the center of the sticky piece. Finally place the other sheet over the art forming a sandwich (sticky side to sticky side). Press gently with the ruler to smooth out any air bubbles. For an added touch punch a hole in the top and thread a satin ribbon through to mark pages.

Dawn Marie Barbyte

Research News

Kids' Snoring and Sleepiness Linked to Inattention and Hyperactivity

A new study published in the March, 2002 issue of *Pediatrics* has found that inattention and hyperactivity are more common among children who have symptoms consistent with sleepiness, and symptoms of sleep-disordered breathing (such as snoring).

Studies done with a small number of children in sleep clinics had found that some of the behaviors we label ADHD are common among children with difficulty breathing while asleep, and that treatment of the breathing problem is often associated with improved behavior.

This study, conducted by Ronald D. Chervin, MD and his associates at University of Michigan Health System, questioned parents of over 800 boys and girls 2 - 14. They found that children who snore often are nearly twice as likely as other children to have hyperactivity problems.

The link was particularly strong for younger boys. Among boys under eight years of age who habitually snore, 22% show symptoms of hyperactivity while among boys who do not usually snore only 9% showed these symptoms.

Excessive daytime sleepiness is also linked to inattention and hyperactivity. Moreover, the researchers found that sleep-disordered breathing from snoring, and sleepiness each contributes independently to the risk of disruptive behavior.

It isn't possible to determine whether children who are inattentive and hyperactive during the day have difficulty getting a good night's sleep or whether kids who have sleep difficulties during the night are inattentive and hyperactive during the day.

However, Chervin suggests that sleep problems in children (and adults) are under-diagnosed even though they can have a major impact on daytime activity and health.

• *Ronald D. Chervin, MD, MS; Kristen Hedger Archbold, PhD; James E. Dillon, MD; Parviz Panahi, MD; Kenneth J. Pituch, MD; Ronald E. Dahl, MD; and Christian Guilleminault, MD. "Inattention, hyperactivity, and symptoms of sleep-disordered breathing." "Pediatrics," 2002; 109(3): 449-456.*

What Does It Mean?

Daytime sleepiness, snoring, and other sleep-related problems appear to be related in some children to inattention and hyperactive behavior. And the sleep problems may be contributing to or even causing some of the behavior difficulties.

If your youngster is hyperactive or has problems with inattention and appears to have difficulties getting a good night's sleep, for example:

- wakes up feeling unrefreshed in the morning
- appears to be sleepy during the day
- is difficult to wake up

(all indications of insufficiently restful sleep) you may want to contact your pediatrician.

Similarly, if your youngster has the symptoms of sleep-disordered breathing such as:

- frequently snores
- stops breathing during the night

you may also want to consult with your child's pediatrician.

The answer may be as simple as making sure your youngster has a consistent bedtime, wakeup time, and a full night's sleep in between. Or, it may indicate difficulties breathing during the night, for example large tonsils which can actually physically interfere with breathing, that can be reduced with medical assistance.

International Migratory Bird Day

International Migratory Bird Day - IMBD was created in 1993 by staff at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. IMBD focuses attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird - its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today this special day is celebrated in the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Central America. The official event date is the second Saturday in May each year - this year it will fall on May 10th.

Like any day of recognition, IMBD exists to focus attention on a valuable resource - the nearly 350 species of migratory birds that travel between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Migratory birds are some of the most beautiful, observable, and remarkable wildlife that share our world. They are also an important economic resource, controlling insect pests and generating billions in recreational dollars.

Many migratory birds are in decline facing threats on their migration routes and in both their winter and summer habitats. So, IMBD is not only a day of recognition and celebration but also a call to action to protect these important creatures.

For more information on IMBD contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's IMBD Information Center at : (703) 358-2318; E-mail: IMBD@fws.gov; or www.birdday.org

Library Resources

Eating, Nutrition, and Exercise

📖 ***American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Nutrition***; Edited by William H. Dietz, MD, PhD, FAAP and Loraine Stern, MD, FAAP; Villard Books; New York; 1999; Hardcover $23.95.
A comprehensive look at children's nutrition spanning the years from newborn to adolescence, with additional chapters on specific issues such as questions of size, eating disorders and more. It's billed as the official and complete home reference. And it is.

📖 ***Children and Teens Afraid to Eat*** by Frances M. Berg, MS; Healthy Weight Network; Hettinger, ND; 2001; Softcover $19.95. 701-567-2646; http://www.healthyweight.net
This book, as well as *Women Afraid to Eat* are definitely books with a position. We fear fat and this fear causes harm in our lives and the lives of our children. Berg (a licensed nutritionist) outlines the risks of disordered eating, and the dangers of dieting and the resulting dislike of our bodies. She says that we should focus on health not on being thin.

📖 ***Moving With a Purpose: Developing programs for preschoolers of all abilities*** by Renee M. McCall MSEd and Diane H. Craft, PhD; Human Kinetics; Champaign, IL; 2000; Softcover phone:217-351-5076 website: http://www.humankinetics.com
As the title implies, this is a book aimed at preschool professionals rather than parents. It's a wonderful resource for those building a movement program. It also includes 54 activities coded by goals (e.g. spatial relationships etc.)

📖 ***Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family*** by Ellyn Satter MS, RD, CICSW; Kelcy Press; Madison, WI; 1999; Softcover $16.95. Phone: 877-844-0857.
Once again Satter has produced a book that gently educates, providing her philosophy of feeding and eating. The book is filled with wisdom, and recipes. There are better cookbooks out there, but there isn't a better book on feeding yourself and your family.

Mothers and Fathers and Books

📖 ***Daddy, Daddy, Be There*** by Candy Dawson Boyd; illustrated by Floyd Cooper; PaperStar (Penguin Putnam Inc.); New York; 1998; Softcover $5.99. If you don't think fathers are crucial to their children, here's the book that will tell you otherwise. From holding hands in scary crowds to staying during hard times, children express their love and need for their fathers.

📖 ***I Want to say I Love You*** by Caralyn Buehner; pictures by Jacqueline Rogers; Phyllis Fogelman Books (Penguin Putnam); New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. When does a mother love her daughter? When the little girl clatters down the stairs, "with your eyes still blinking sleep, and your porcupine-ish hair." When she receives a gift of two dead bees, when she watches her daughter learn and grow each day.

📖 ***Kiss Good Night*** by Amy Hest; illustrated by Anita Jeram; Candlewich Press; Cambridge, MA; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. "It was a dark and stormy night on Plum Street." Sam was going to bed. But what was he waiting for, after the story, and the tucking in? His mom's good night kisses.

📖 ***My Dad*** by Anthony Browne; Farrar Straus Giroux; New York; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. With a touch of good humor, here's a Dad who can do it all (and never even have to remove his plaid bathrobe and stripped PJs). He can wrestle giants and is wise as an owl. A wonderful funny tribute to dads.

📖 ***My Ol' Man*** by Patricia Polacco; Paperstar (Penguin Putnam); New York; 1999; Softcover, $5.99. This book is a sweet tribute to the author's bigger-than-life father and what happens when he losses his job. It's about the importance of faith in the future and in ourselves.

📖 ***The Painter*** by Peter Catalanotto; Orchard Books; New York; 1999; Softcover $5.95. The daily life of a little child and her artist father. The book shines with love through the text and the luminous watercolor paintings.

📖 ***Supermom*** by Mick Manning; illustrated by Brita Granstrom; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2001; Hardcover. Moms come in all sizes, shapes and flavors: not only human but animal Moms as well. "Supermom is everything! They know the best games, talk to their babies (although in different ways), protect their children, and more. Moms come in all forms but they're all moms.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

En Español

Volume 17 Number 5 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | May - 2002

Criando Niños que Saben Como Comer

Existe una paradoja en la manera en que la mayoría de nosotros comemos. Ha sido parte de nuestras vidas por tanto tiempo que ni siquiera nos damos cuenta, o quizás si, pero nos olvidamos y seguimos adelante. Nos encantan las porciones generosas y siempre pensamos que debiéramos comer menos.

Los buffet que permiten comer hasta la saciedad, panecillos gigantes, hamburguesas de media libra, porciones de papas fritas grandes, y una mentalidad de "que tienes que comerte todo lo que hay en el plato", todo esto está en clara contradicción con nuestra obsesión con cuerpos delgados y comer sanamente. Aunque parece que no lo notáramos, esta contradicción ha puesto a los adultos en una situación difícil. Comemos y después nos preocupamos sobre nuestro peso, nuestros hábitos alimenticios y nuestra falta de autocontrol, quizás mientras consumimos una caja de galletas bajas en grasa (pero con mucha azúcar) durante el proceso.

Es bastante malo que nos hagamos estas cosas a nosotros mismos, pero está quedando claro que las obsesiones de los padres sobre tamaño corporal, comer y dietas, causa problemas para nuestros niños, incluso con los preescolares. La madre de un niño de 6 años recientemente preguntó si era una buena idea llevar a su hija gordita a una clínica dietética. Algunos pediatras se toman la cabeza a dos manos cuando ven bebés, que de acuerdo a sus cuadros, son demasiado pesados para su tamaño.

Esta preocupación tiene algo de fundamento. El aumento de peso excesivo es el resultado de poca actividad y demasiado consumo de calorías. La obesidad infantil puede seguir hasta ser adulto conjuntamente con todos los riesgos para la salud.

Los Padres Frecuentemente Enseñan Alimentación Disfuncional

Lo que hacemos en nombre de una cura crea, incluso aumenta, el problema. Resulta que los padres pueden inadvertidamente enseñarles a sus niños alimentación disfuncional, incluso causando niveles más altos de grasa corporal que la que están tratando de evitar.

Los investigadores de la Escuela de Medicina de la Universidad de Boston descubrieron que los padres de niños de tres a cinco años que rigurosamente controlaban su propia dieta, tenían los niños que menos aumentaban de peso. Pero los padres que combinaban restricciones dietéticas con episodios de alimentación poco controlada tenían niños que aumentaban y aumentaban de peso.

¿Por qué pasa esto? Los niños aprenden a comer de sus padres. La conducta que los padres daban como modelo alternaba entre "Tengo que cuidar mi peso y mi dieta muy

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

metódicamente", y "Por Dios, no puedo creer que me comí todos los dulces".

"Los padres que practican ambas conductas pueden inconscientemente debilitar la autonomía de sus niños en cuanto a sus opciones de alimentos", dice Maggie Hood, MPH, la directora del estudio. Los niños necesitan usar sus propias señales internas de hambre y de estar satisfechos (saciedad) como guía de su alimentación. "Los padres que exhiben alternadamente control y perdida de control seguramente están guiados en su propia alimentación por factores mas externos que internos. Estas conductas pueden ser transmitidas a sus niños, suprimiendo la habilidad de los niños de regular su propia ingestión dietética". Claramente, estos niños y adultos han perdido su habilidad de usar el hambre y la saciedad para regular su ingestión de alimentos.

Investigaciones mas recientes publicadas en el American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (Birch & Fisher, 2000) sugieren que demasiado control restrictivo sobre la alimentación de los niños, sin ese ciclo de saciarse insensatamente, disminuye la habilidad de los niños de ajustar su propia ingestión de alimentos. Estos niños no aprenden a comer cuando tienen hambre y a parar cuando están satisfechos. Sino que están vulnerables a las atracciones de los golosinas, comer mas dulces, helados, cuando están disponibles.

Los investigadores descubrieron que las madres que pensaban que sus hijas tenían sobrepeso tenían mas posibilidad de restringir la alimentación de sus hijas. Pero entre las madres que mas restringían el insumo de alimentos de sus hijas, estas niñas comían más cuando tenían la oportunidad, incluso cuando acababan de comer el almuerzo y decían que no tenían hambre. Y así se creaba un círculo poco saludable. Las madres percibían a sus hijas como gordas y restringían su ingestión de alimentos lo que a su vez hacía mas probable que sus hijas comieran bocadillos cuando tenían la oportunidad y de aumentar de peso.

El problema subyacente es que los niños no han aprendido a comer y dejar de comer en respuesta a señales internas. Al contrario, su ingestión de comida depende en aspectos del entorno y por las señales externas que les dice qué y cuanto deben comer.

El Entorno es Importante
Mensajes de la Televisión

En cuanto a los mensajes desde el mundo exterior, todo está en contra de comer saludablemente. Si tiene alguna duda, siéntese con sus niños y mire los comerciales en la televisión. ¿Qué productos son publicitados? ¿Cuanto de ellos son golosinas, comida chatarra, y cereales con alto contenido de azúcar?

"Uno enfrenta una cultura muy bien financiada que aprueba comida con mucha grasa, mucha azúcar, y grandes porciones de comida chatarra", dice Ronald Marino, DO, Director de Pediatría General del Hospital Universitario Winthrop.

La publicidad es fuerte. Los niños crecen queriendo bebidas y cereales con grandes cantidades de azúcar y bocadillos con mucha grasa.

El Tamaño de la Porción es Importante

Cuanta comida hay en el plato también es importante, en cuanto a cuanto comen los niños y los adultos. En un estudio llevado a cabo en la Universidad Estatal de Pennsylvania, los investigadores descubrieron que los niños de cinco años comían más cuando se les ofrecía porciones más grandes, aunque los niños de tres años y medio comían la misma cantidad no obstante cuanto se les ofrecía. "Los niños pequeños tienen una capacidad natural para auto regular su ingestión de comida", escriben las autoras Barbara Rolls, PhD. Dianne Engell, PhD, y Leann Birch, PhD, "pero nuestros estudios indican que en algún momento entre las edades de 3 y 5 años, aprenden a ignorar sus señales internas de hambre y responden a otras señales, incluyendo el tamaño de la porción". Para estos niños ofrecerles una porción grande puede promover comer demasiado y sobrepeso. "La conducta aprendida de ignorar las señales internas de hambre tiene raíces muy tempranas", dicen estas autoras.

Variabilidad de Día a Día

La alimentación de los niños también demuestra una variabilidad que puede afligir a los padres. Los adultos creen que la gente debe comer más o menos la misma cantidad en cada comida, pero los niños son Frecuentemente inconsistentes en cuanto a qué y cuanto comen, consumiendo grandes cantidades de alimentos al almuerzo y muy poco durante el almuerzo al otro día. El resultado es que los padres empiezan a creer que los niños simplemente no saben comer sin la intervención o supervisión de un adulto. Esta preocupación de los padres no tiene fundamento. Aunque la ingestión de energía de comida a comida es algo errático, los niños son generalmente consistentes en la cantidad de calorías que consumen durante un periodo de 24 horas.

También Depende de Cuanta Energía es Gastada

También sabemos que los genes juegan un papel en el tipo de cuerpo y no hay mucho que se pueda hacer en cuanto a la predisposición genética. Una tendencia a tener muslos gordos o rollos en la cintura puede pasar de padre a hijo simplemente porque están hechos de esa manera y porque tienen un metabolismo específico. "Los niños tienden a asumir la forma de sus padres", dice el Dr. Marino. "Sin embargo, esa forma puede ser modificada por dos cosas; lo que uno come y lo que uno hace –el nivel de actividad y dieta".

Antes, jugar afuera de la casa con los amigos era mucho más entretenido que las diversiones ofrecidas en la casa. Pero hoy día la situación es todo lo contrario. Jugar al aire libre con los amigos, andar en bicicleta, jugar a la pelota han perdido interés en relación a las computadoras y la televisión. "Los estudios claramente demuestran una correlación directa y lineal entre las horas de consumo de televisión y la obesidad. La TV y las computadoras fomentan un estilo de vida sedentario", dice el Dr. Marino.

Qué Hacer

Aliente a sus niños a que le presten atención a sus señales internas y déle a sus hijos algo de autonomía en su alimentación. De acuerdo a la nutricionista y asistente social Hellyn Satter (Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family (Kelcy Press, 1999), "los padres son responsables de qué, cuando y el donde de la alimentación. Los niños son responsables de cuanto y si van a comer".

Esto quiere decir que los padres deciden que servir en las comidas pero los niños deciden cuanto comer -- incluso si van a comer. Quizás este pensando, ¡"Qué,¡ mi hijo no comería nada"! Eso no es realmente verdad. Los niños no se van a morir de hambre si hay comida saludable disponible. Pero los padres aprensivos incluso preparan comidas especiales, mendigan, sobornan e incluso amenazan a niños renuentes. Y esto no es alimentación sana. "He concluido de mi experiencia clínica ---y las investigaciones apoyan mis conclusiones-- que si Ud. trata de que los niños coman más de lo que quieren, la comida les causa repugnancia y comen menos cuando tienen la oportunidad. Si uno trata que los niños coman menos de lo que quieren, se empiezan a preocupar de la comida y comen más cuando tienen la oportunidad", escribe Satter.

Ofrezca una comida familiar con varios alimentos saludables. Después, deje que su niño seleccione qué y cuanto comer. Esta es una situación ganadora porque su hijo siente que tiene control sobre su alimentación y, al mismo tiempo, todos los alimentos son saludables. Y no tienes que cocinar platos especiales para complacer a un niño difícil de alimentar.

Introduzca Nuevos Alimentos Paulatinamente

Su familia se está sentado a comer. La verdura de hoy son los espárragos. Su hija nunca las ha visto antes e inmediatamente las echa a un lado. Esta es una reacción muy común y la manera en que reaccionas puede ser muy importante.

Los niños no aceptan nuevos alimentos con mucha facilidad (a no ser que sea dulce). Muchos padres para evitar peleas sobre los alimentos simplemente dejan de introducir nuevos alimentos o sobornan.

Usar comidas muy apetecidas como soborno generalmente tiene el efecto contrario. Esto hace a los alimentos menos favorecidos que se conviertan en incluso menos atractivos a medida que el niño piensa ¿"me tienen que sobornar para que me coma esto? Debe ser realmente malo." El soborno también disminuye la habilidad de los niños a regular su propia ingestión de energía alimenticia.

Muchas de los rechazos iniciales del niño pueden ser cambiados. La solución es ser suavemente persistente, introduciendo el nuevo alimento varias veces. Los expertos sugieren un cronograma que incluya dos oportunidades para probar el alimento cada semana. Esto no va a suceder de inmediato. Esto puede requerir hasta 10 presentaciones antes de que se vea un cambio en la actitud de su niño.

También puedes generar la expectativa que tu niño va a probar nuevos alimentos. Generaciones de niños han sido criados con el exhorto de "solo pruébalo". Pero la clave es comenzar esta política antes de que los niños inicien los "terribles dos años".

¿Qué otra cosa es útil? Ver a otros, preferiblemente sus compañeros, que parecen realmente gozar de los nuevos alimentos. No le reste importancia al más chico de la familia que mira a los padres y a los hermanos mayores que gozan de los nuevos alimentos.

Introducir el alimento en un atmósfera agradable también es útil. Cuando la hora de comer se ha convertido en una lucha por el poder, no espere que su niño acepte un nuevo alimento. Sólo se convertirá en un nuevo campo de batalla.

También puedes intentar presentar la nueva comida como un golosina, o de una manera distinta. ¿Los espárragos no fueron un éxito para la cena? Intente presentarlas como un bocadillo junto a un alimento conocido.

Evite la Regla del "Plato Limpio"

Y luego tenemos la política del "plato limpio". Esta también puede tener las repercusiones contrarias, debilitando la habilidad de los niños de saber cuando tienen hambre y cuando

están satisfechos. Enfocar enlimpiar los platos hace a los niños menos sensibles a las señales de su cuerpo sobre el hambre y la saciedad. Si no Quieres que tus Niños Coman Muchas Papas Fritas, Dulces y Helados no los Tenga en la Casa

Los niños (y los adultos) comen lo que está disponible. Si tienes muchos helados en el refrigerador, bolsas de papas fritas, dulces y galletas en la despensa, no se sorprenda si su familia se los come. Están demasiado disponibles. En vez tenga frutas y pequeñas porciones de golosinas.

¿Y qué tiene de malo con tener helados como una golosina familiar en vez de un postre común y corriente? Uno de los placeres de mi familia ha sido un viaje a la tienda a comer helados, o a comprar los ingredientes para postres especiales y gozar el placer de hacerlos y comerlos. Generalmente acompañado de risas, conversación, y los sonidos de alegría "esto está tan rico".

Finalmente, Satter nos recuerda, ¿"Qué ha pasado con verdaderamente gozar de la comida? La comida los nutrirá y los hará fuertes y les dará alegría". Coman con ganas pero también con discernimiento.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. es la editora de Parent & Pre-schooler, y escritora independiente que escribe sobre temas relacionados a la paternidad y la salud infantil.

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Translated by
TIKAL Translations
(212) 569-6475

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17. Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* June - 2002

School Readiness

It May Not Be What You Think

Jackie was concerned about her four-year-old son's readiness for kindergarten. His birthday was at the end of November, assuring him a spot as one of the youngest kids in his grade. His pre-kindergarten teacher, after telling her what a sweet, well-liked child her son was, told Jackie he was not ready for kindergarten. The teacher added that her son showed some immaturity but gave few tangible measures of his development to help his parents understand what she meant.

All of Jackie's friends told her to "keep him back" and promised her that he would be the smartest in his grade because he will be ahead of everyone. Jackie even went to speak to the principal of her son's elementary school. The principal assured her that her son should start with his peers and that they never suggest holding a child back. Jackie was confused by all this conflicting information, and became even more anxious about making a decision that might not be good for her child.

- A senior school administrator called a child guidance agency to get some help with an increasing school concern--children entering kindergarten without sufficient toilet training. The district was faced with five children, who were otherwise developing typically, but whose parents said that their approach to toilet training was to let the children decide when they would be ready.

The children all did fine on their kindergarten screenings and seemed ready for the cognitive tasks of school, but the administrator said she couldn't have them come to school in diapers or pull ups.

- Salina was a petite four-year-old who was having a terrible time separating from her parents, staying extremely shy and anxious even after a year and a half in her preschool. A loving and supportive staff measured Salina's progress in baby steps, and slowly this worried little girl grew to trust her teachers.

The curriculum at this school was based on play skills with lots of free time and arts and crafts for the children. Shy Salina had little interaction with her peers. She was clearly more the observer than a participant, and had very few social interactions with her peers outside of school. The preschool recommended that Salina stay in their setting for an extra year even though her August birthday placed her among the more mature children in her class. Her parents felt that their daughter, who had been receiving special therapeutic services for her extreme separation anxiety, was not like the other children and would never be ready for the demands of kindergarten.

All three examples are true and capture the complex picture of child development. But the school personnel and these parents still needed to make decisions about a child's school readiness.

Every generation seems to have different expectations for its young children and performance measures are now a serious part of the school experience. Because so much attention is paid to the academic success and failure of our school children, parents have begun to feel that school readiness must include a variety of learned facts.

In reality, school readiness is based on the development of skills that

will allow children to be prepared for the **teacher** to teach those facts. Kids don't need to know everything before they start kindergarten, but they need to have developed the capacity to learn. School readiness, in spite of the enormous pressure parents and children experience to learn information, faster, sooner, and better than their peers, is based less on how four- and five-year-olds memorize the alphabet and much more on their social, emotional and developmental readiness. Some aspects of what school readiness means may surprise you.

What kids need to know

Many of the children who are described as not being ready for school are lacking in their social and emotional development. A recent publication of a national consortium advocating for children's mental health services stated, "...few know what research has now confirmed: Social and emotional school readiness is critical to a successful kindergarten transition, early school success, and even later accomplishments in the workplace." (A Good Beginning: Sending America's children to school with the social and emotional competence they need to succeed, The Child Mental Health Foundations & Agencies Network; 2000, page vii).

The skills that children need to master in order to become successful learners in school include the following:

Capacity to trust adults

The teacher is the head of the class, and young children need to have learned to trust adults in order to be able to follow a teacher's guidance. Children have to believe that a teacher will act protectively in order for them to follow class rules. They have to have mastered some degree of separation so they can tolerate having the teacher pay attention to their classmates. Children need to know that adults can be counted on to respond when asked for help in order to be able to work at a desk or table independently. Lastly, children have to believe that they will receive adult approval for their efforts. The rewards of learning new skills and having them appreciated by the teacher will stay powerful motivators for learning throughout children's school experience.

Social skills and peer connectedness

Children need to know how to play with each other. Learning to get along with others is a key life skill and certainly does not have to be finished by kindergarten, but children have to begin to learn the dynamics of social exchange – acts of kindness, politeness, sharing, patience, assertiveness, and especially fun – are all part of the mosaic of peer communication. Children

rarely come home to tell their parents about how excited they are to have learned two new numbers, but they will talk about who sat with them at lunch, who played nicely with them in the playground, who made fun of them on the bus.

The social dynamics in school can be tough. There is a natural chaos that develops when you have a dozens of children running free during recess. Children need to know how to make sense of that lack of structure. Shy children need to know how to find the gentler children, how to talk to the more outspoken children, and how to ask for help when they need it. The children who have not learned to respect other people's feelings will find themselves in trouble very early on. They may be labeled as "problem children" when, in fact, they may simply have not learned the important rules of play. Kindergarten will be less well supervised than nursery and pre-kindergarten and our children will have to know how to get along with each other.

Good physical health and health skills

Children with untreated or unstable medical conditions or disabilities will not be able to use the school environment adequately. Frequent absences, with longer recoveries, all interfere with a child's opportunity to build skills and have success in school. Early childhood screenings to rule out major obstacles to learning are extremely important. Hearing and vision tests and careful follow up to persistent medical conditions (such as asthma or chronic ear infections) can make the difference between

success and failure.

Early childhood professionals and parents need to follow up on developmental concerns and provide the best interventions possible. Children who cannot function in a school environment for health reasons may interpret their difficulties as their own personal failures.

In addition, toileting and self-care habits (using tissues, washing hands after toileting, managing utensils to eat) are all important and enhance the child's sense of competence and independence in the classroom and school setting.

Emotional Health and Safety

Little children can have very big feelings. They too suffer when their families struggle with stressors such as poverty, illness, immigration, loneliness, or death and loss. Children who witness violence, not on T.V. screens, but in their living rooms, backyards or neighborhoods will be more vulnerable and feel that they are never truly safe. Children who do not feel safe in their homes, schools, or communities will be more preoccupied and worried. If they are afraid of what awaits them at the end of the hallway or at home, they will find it harder to learn and pay attention to the work of the classroom.

The pressures that children face are varied. A divorce, a new baby, inadequate child care and poor early childhood experiences all influence a child's ability to come to school eagerly and prepared to pay attention in class.

In addition, the skills needed to regulate emotions: using words instead of hitting or throwing things, recovering from hurt feelings, articulating needs and wants, developing frustration tolerance, need to be encouraged in those able to develop these skills naturally or taught to children in school.

The classroom is a group experience and the school is a community. Success in both depends on the establishment of common rules and goals. It is the presence of that common understanding and expectation of the school environment that will allow a trained teacher to work effectively.

What Parents Need to do

Parents and caregivers have a great impact on preparing their children for school.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

✓ Observe your three- and four-year-old in action. See how they play with other children, pay attention to how well they listen to you and other adults in their world.

✓ Keep track of how they are doing developmentally compared to their peers or your other children.

✓ If something strikes you as being worrisome or just not quite right, ask a professional about it. Your pediatrician, child care provider, even the librarian at story time all have a sense of how your child is doing in a particular setting. If you are not satisfied, there are trained early childhood developmental specialists who can help you get a clearer picture of your child's strengths and weaknesses.

✓ Try to create an atmosphere of safety in your home, and that includes clear and simple rules about hitting, being alone, how adults and children should talk to each other. You will also need to be able to establish limits about what is appropriate and what isn't when it comes to television and movies or other activities. Your kids will make you miserable when you set rules, but they will feel safer living in an environment where someone cares enough to say "no" in order to protect them. And they will function better outside the home.

✓ Create opportunities for learning and let your children know that you value the school experience, even if it was hard for you. Sharing music, visiting places of interest in your community, listening to stories from elder family members, reading or looking at picture books (in any language) are all ways that parents teach their children that learning about the world is a good thing.

✓ Help your child learn about feelings, and develop appropriate behaviors to express and manage them. These are key to your child's readiness to be in a group setting.

✓ Make sure that your school has a good kindergarten program that is appropriate for young children. Visit the school where your child will be going and ask the administrators and teachers what they expect from their five-year-olds and if their staff are trained to work with young children.

Kindergarten classrooms are not always quiet rooms. They should be buzzing with lots of play and organized activities. Don't be afraid to ask the teacher why

she plans the curriculum as she does or how she handles children who miss home. If something doesn't feel right to you speak with the principal. If one teacher seems too relaxed and unstructured perhaps another teacher would be a better choice. If you don't like being in the building or the classroom, chances are your child won't either.

As for the families mentioned in opening of this article, Jackie is having her child evaluated. She was concerned that her son's teachers were picking up real developmental weaknesses that would make the classroom experience hard for him. When she has a better picture of his strengths, she and her husband will decide if their son is really kindergarten ready.

The school district spoke to the parents of the children who were not yet toilet trained. In the summer before their children started kindergarten, the school offered support and tips to help these children get school ready.

Salina had good academic potential but was extremely anxious and overwhelmed in the loosely structured nursery school. Her parents decided to enroll their daughter in kindergarten anyway. Salina needed much less help than had been anticipated and the greater structure and emphasis on organized activities made it easier for her to find opportunities for success. Salina talks proudly about getting ready to be a first grader.

Getting our young children ready for school is something that concerns parents and professionals. But with clear expectations and adequate support families and school can work together to help children succeed in learning.

Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW is the Director of the Marks Family Right from the Start 0-3⁺ Center of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. A nationally-recognized lecturer and trainer, having been a practitioner and consultant in child development for over 25 years, Ms. wolkoff is also a freelance writer and appears frequently on television and radio.

Here Comes Summer!

As summer approaches so do the dreaded mosquito bites and bee stings. Insect bites are usually harmless but can sometimes be serious - remember last summer's West Nile Virus outbreaks throughout the northeast? The American Academy of Pediatrics offers parents and caregivers some tips to help keep kids safe:

- Don't use hairsprays, perfumes, or scented soaps on your child or yourself if you will be outdoors.
- Don't dress your child in bright colors or flowery prints for outdoor play.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate. Stagnant water, uncovered food, and flower gardens are all areas around which to be cautious.

If a child is bitten and there is a visible stinger, remove it from the skin by gently scraping it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail. You can also use a pair of tweezers or your fingers to pinch it out. Cleanse with warm water and soap and rinse well. Watch the bite area and if your child has any reaction such as swelling or redness, contact your pediatrician immediately.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Dear Reader ...

I don't think there's anything more stressful than attending school. Children must spend all day being flooded with information and they are tested regularly to determine how much they actually retain. And it had better be most of that material.

If that wasn't enough, we've started to demand more and more at younger and younger ages. Children in kindergarten are now being taught the information first graders used to learn. There are specialized curricula being developed for preschoolers so that they can be ready for kindergarten. Schools have even begun testing children to determine if they are ready for what had once been a time to become comfortable with school and the joy of learning.

This borders on folly. According to the position statement on School Readiness issued by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "It is often assumed that tests exist to reliably determine which children are "ready" to enter school. Because of the nature of child development and how children learn, it is extremely difficult to develop reliable and valid measures of young children's abilities. Preschool children, by nature, are not good test-takers. When tests are used to make decisions that have significant impact on children's lives, such as denial of entry or assignment to a special class, the tests must offer the highest assurance of reliability and validity."

They conclude that no existing readiness measure meets these criteria. In fact, they believe it is simply inappropriate to determine school entry on the basis of acquiring a limited set of skills and abilities.

In view of the importance of this issue, Sandy Wolkoff, CSW has written one of her warm and wise articles discussing what readiness really means. Yes, success in kindergarten may well require certain levels of development, but you'll probably be surprised to discover just what they are.

June is the beginning of summer and many families are thinking about what to do during vacation. We have a roundup of free or low cost factory tours. They're fun and educational, and some come with free samples.

Preschooler in the Kitchen, books to whet your child's enthusiasm for learning, and more in this issue.

Happy Summer!

Heide Schwartzberg

Ready, Set, School

It's the summer before your child begins school. How can you help him get ready? Parents need to remember that they should begin to prepare their child for school during the summer.

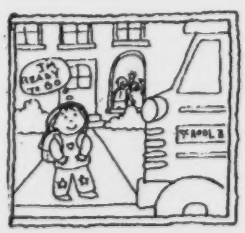
• Remember that beginning school is an experience shared by the entire family. Kids respond in different ways to new beginnings so parents need to respond to these feelings with a positive and helpful attitude.

• Plan for the first day by visiting the school. A child will feel more confident if he is familiar with the actual school environment so plan a few visits to the school during the summer. Go over things more than once explaining just what will be expected of him when he attends school.

• Support your child during this critical transition. Set aside a special time to talk about school. This will establish a sharing time that, once she begins school, can be used to discuss the details of the school day. We must realize that everyone responds to challenges in different way, this special sharing time will allow parents to help their child develop strategies for coping with her new environment.

• Begin to establish new routines in preparation for the big day. Begin to practice these new routines during the summer when the family is relaxed and not under pressure. Designate a few days a week in which the family can practice what they will need to do once school begins. Getting up, dressing, eating breakfast, preparing lunches, and catching the school bus can all be gone over until everyone is comfortable.

Saying "good-bye" to baby-hood is hard for everyone but new beginnings can also be wonderful. A good first experience in school will set the stage for future academic endeavors. It will also give your child many new and positive skills upon which they can build their future.



Thunder and Lightening and Rain ... Oh My ! ! !

Reports of a fast-moving line of thunderstorms was recently in the news. The storms took residents by surprise as loud claps of thunder set off car alarms and rattled windows. Every year, as winter gives way to spring and spring to summer, severe thunder storms are likely to strike in many areas of the United States and throughout the world.

This is the time to be warned - lightening can strike just about any object in its path. So when a lightening and thunder storm does appear remember these tips offered by the Power Authority of Long Island, New York:

If You are Caught Outdoors and Unprotected:

(1) Get into the nearest hard-topped car
(2) Never take shelter under a tree
(3) Avoid hills and areas that are higher then other areas of the landscape
(4) Get out and away from pools, lakes, rivers, or other bodies of water
(5) Keep away from metal objects such as bikes, machinery, etc.
(6) Spread out - never stand in a crowd of people
(7) If you feel a tingling sensation or your hair stands on end, a lightening strike may be coming - immediately crouch down and cover your ears - do not lie down or place your hands on the ground.

If You are Indoors:

(1) Stand clear of windows, doors, and electrical appliances
(2) Never unplug an appliance during a storm but do unplug them well in advance if you have been forewarned
(3) Do not touch pipes, sinks, baths, or faucets
(4) Do not use the telephone except for emergencies

Remember that victims of lightning shock should receive CPR if necessary and seek medical attention immediately. Your local power authority should have a storm preparedness web site for more complete information. If not available locally, contact the LIPA web site at www.lipower.org to find useful information on what to do before, during, and after a storm.

Special Note: If your child becomes severely frightened or distressed during storms, you may want to consult your pediatrician.

See It Made: Factory Tours Across America

If you and your family take to the roads this summer, why not plan a couple of factory tours. They're fun and most are free or very low cost. The only drawback may be the gift shop at the end. Pick your tours carefully; you may end up owning some examples of the product.

Always call ahead for directions, hours, reservations, wheelchair and stroller accessibility, and age restrictions. Most tours are better taken during the week when the plants are in operation but some are offered on weekends.

✱ California

Jelly Belly Candy Company
One Jelly Belly Lane
Fairfield, CA 94533
800 953-5592

Tour the factory where the (almost) legendary Jelly Belly beans are made. The guided program lasts about 35 minutes and takes place in a working factory. This walking tour is wheelchair and stroller accessible.

The exhibition candy kitchen makes hand-dipped chocolates and seasonal candy. Visitors can taste samples as well as buy sweets. There's also the Cafe and the Java Bar as well as an outdoor patio and picnic area.

✱ Florida

Whetstone Chocolates
St. Augustine, FL
904 825-1700 ext 25

This free self-guided tour starts with a video then continues with the factory's Molding Plant, Packing Room, and Specialty Room. At the end, chocolate lovers get a free sample. They strongly recommend you call first.

✱ Ohio

Harry London Candies
Canton, OH
800 321-0444

Offers a 45-minute guided tour of the chocolate factory and a sample of the goods at the end. Of course there's the Chocolate Store for purchases (over 500 varieties of chocolate and other candies). Tours are best taken during the week. There is a cost of $1 for children 3 and up.

✱ Oregon

Tillamook Cheese
4175 Highway 101 North
Tillamook, OR 97141
503 815-1300

This self-guided tour showcases the cheese making process through viewing platforms and interactive kiosks. At the end of the tour they offer free samples of Tillamook's cheese.

They also have an ice cream counter, cafe, retail store, and gift shop.

✱ Pennsylvania

Herr's Snack Foods
Visitors Center
Herr Drive
Nottingham, PA 19362
800 284-7488

Reservations are strongly suggested for this factory tour. There's a video with Chipper the Chipmunk and then a visit to the factory itself with a view of the manufacturing process. The tour is free and has no age restrictions but check for stroller accessibility.

They describe it as filled with "educational tidbits, technological wizardry, and tasty little morsels... ."

Martin Guitar Factory
510 Sycamore Street
Nazareth PA 18064
800 633-2060

If there's a budding musician in the family you may want to try this free, guided, factory tour, lasting about one hour. The tour takes place Monday through Friday (except during holiday periods) at 1 PM. There's also a collection of unusual and vintage guitars in the Martin Museum. All ages are welcomed although young children may not be as fascinated by the content. It's stroller accessible.

✱ Vermont

Vermont Teddy Bear
2031 Shelburne Road
Shelburne, VT
800 829-BEAR or 802 985-1319

This tour sounds very cute, but you may not be able to escape without actually purchasing a bear. They call it a hands-on tour. You will be able to see the machines stamping out bear parts and the bears being assembled and stuffed. But the kids also get a chance to brush the bear's fur, and fall in love with one of these furry creatures.

When *Parent & preschooler* inquired we were informed that the least expensive bear available in the gift shop was 8" tall and costs $12. From there they go up in price but we were told there is a nice selection in the $20 - $30 range.

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream
Waterbury, VT
866-BJ-TOURS

Sign up for these 30-minute guided tours is on a first-come, first-served basis. Tour starts with a movie on the history of the company and its founders, Ben and Jerry. Then there's a visit to the mezzanine for a view of the plant in action and an explanation of the ice cream manufacturing process. The FlavoRoom has samples of the days flavors. Of course, there's the scoop (and gift) shop for more ice cream treats.

The tours cost $2 for adults. Children 12 and under are free.

✱ Wisconsin

Jelly Belly Center
10100 Jelly Belly Lane
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158
866 TOUR JBC (868-7522)

If you can't make it to the California plant, you can still have a jelly bean experience. Take the warehouse tour aboard the express train for a tour inside the warehouse and distribution center. The 30 minute ride stops at Stations where a large-screen video shows the process of candy making. The retail store has samples of the 100 candies. There's also a snack bar.

For more information on factory tours: ***Watch it Made in the USA: A visitor's guide to the companies that make your favorite products*** by Karen Axelrod & Bruce Brumberg; Avalon Travel; 800-285-4078. A new edition will be coming out soon. The current edition dates back to 1997 so be sure to check the information.

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Summertime Cook-Outs

The winter season is great for people who like to ski, or do any winter sport. But for many of us, winter is the season of hope -- hope that springtime is close by. Then, there's summer, filled with picnics, games, swimming, biking, or just relaxing on a hammock under a tree in the yard. As we move from Spring to Summer, this is the perfect time to have a cookout with family, friends, and co-workers.

It is a pleasure to have your preschooler helping you in this American favorite pastime, it is also a teaching time for the them. The adults should help preschoolers to understand and respect cooking with fire, charcoal, gas, or electricity – what they can and can't do; what they have to be careful with; and how they can help.

I have two suggestions for burgers, one is a Turkey burger and the other is a Vegeguer. Vegeguer was a name that I invented when I gave a demonstration on how to prepare hamburgers for a Girls Scout troop in California. I also made a vegetable one, and they had a wonderful time pronouncing the name VE-GE-GUER.

Please wash your hands, put on your apron and sing some songs together with your youngster as you prepare your meal.

Turkey Burger

1 green apple, cored and peeled
1 small onion, quartered
2 cloves of garlic
1 1/2 pounds ground turkey meat
1 egg white
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
3 tablespoons fresh bread crumbs
Vegetable oil
Hamburger rolls
Garnishes:
Dried tomatoes packed in olive oil, lettuce leaves, mayonnaise, pickle slices

• Child: measure the salt, pepper, and bread crumbs, and set aside.
• Adult: break the egg and separate the white.
• Adult: Place the apple, onion, and garlic in the bowl of a food processor, and process the ingredients for just for a few seconds, or hand chop. You want the ingredients to be medium chopped. Place the mixture in a large bowl.
• Child: Combine the meat with the apple mixture. Add the egg white, salt, pepper, and bread crumbs. Mix until well blended with your hands, which is much more fun, or use a wooden spoon. Cover the mixture with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
• Adult: Prepare the grill: Remove the mixture from the refrigerator. Measure half cup of the mixture (this gives you 4 ounces for each burger.) Show your child how to measure it and place on a tray.
• Child and Adult: Form each portion into patties and set aside.
• Oil your hands and rub the oil on the burgers, then place on the prepared grill. Grill the burgers on one side for about 8 minutes, then turn them over and grill for another 8 minutes. Or if you have a meat thermometer, when it indicates 160 F., the burgers are ready.
• Child: Depending on your preference, spread some mayo on both sides of the rolls. Arrange 2 dried tomatoes on one side of the roll. Place the burger over the tomato, then the lettuce, and last the pickle. Cover with the other half of the roll. Enjoy!

Vegeguer

1 bunch of green onions, rinsed and finely chopped (both white and green parts)
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 cloves minced garlic
2 14-oz. cans of chick peas
1 14-oz. can of black beans
1 14-oz. can of cooked corn
2 egg whites, at room temperature
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon light soy sauce
1 teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons cornstarch
Hamburger rolls
Garnishes: Dried tomatoes packed in olive oil, lettuce leaves, mayonnaise, and pickle slices.

• Adult: Chop the green onions, parsley, and garlic. Set aside. Open the cans of chick peas, beans, and corn. Place in a colander to drain all the liquids. Separate the egg whites, and place in a large bowl.
• Child: Mash the chick peas, beans, and corn with the egg whites using a potato masher.(Adult: Just between you and me, you'll probably have to help the child on the mashing step above.)
• Child: Combine and mix in the onion, parsley, garlic, Parmesan, soy, ginger, and cornstarch, and mix well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.
• Child and Adult: Mold the vegeguers into patties.
• Adult: Heat a little oil in the skillet. Add a few vegeguers and let them sauté for about 5 minutes, then turn on the other side and sauté for 5 more minutes, or until firm on both sides.
• Child: Let the child make the sandwiches as with the turkey burgers above. Serve hot or warm. Makes about 6 to 8 Vegeguers.

Have a wonderful and frolicking summer.

Sandra N. Allen

Library Resources

For Adults

📖 ***Fun with Mommy & Me*** by Dr. Cindy Bunin Nurik with Jane Schonberger; Dutton; New York, 2001; Hardcover. Yes, it's from the developer of the Mommy & Me program but it stands on its own as a book chock full of activities to share with your little one, birth to age five. There's more than just 300 sing-along songs, crafts, and little games. The activities are coded by the skills they encourage. For babies up to age 24 month the activities are arranged in age-graded sections with an introduction containing child development information. For toddlers and preschoolers the activities are organized by month, still coded with the knowledge encouraged by the activity as well as the highlights unique to each month. This book is a clear winner.

For Kids

Our Bodies

📖 ***Eyes, Nose, Fingers, and Toes: A first book all about you*** by Judy Hindley; illustrated by Brita Granstrom; Candlewick Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. As the title says, it's eyes, noses, fingers and toes, along with mouths, and necks and backs and more. Charming illustrations show a back is to stretch so high and tall, or curl up snug and small. Feet are for stomping and suddenly stopping.

Language

📖 ***I Invited a Dragon to Dinner and other poems to make you laugh out loud*** illustrated by Chris L. Demarest; Philomel Books, New York, 2002; Hardcover $16.99. A wonderful collection of whimsical poems. Although aimed at children older than preschoolers, the language is rich and delicious. And more than a few of these verses will provoke a parent's laughter.

📖 ***More Parts*** by Tedd Arnold; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 2001; Hardcover $15.99. Another winner by Tedd Arnold. Ever think about some of the expressions we use? Well, our concrete-thinking youngsters may interpret them differently. This little boy wonders about giving his father a hand, what grandma means by holding your tongue, and how babies could scream their lungs out.

📖 ***Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*** by Robert Frost; illustrated by Susan Jeffers; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 2001; Hardcover $15.99. A beautifully illustrated version of Frost's beloved poem.

Rhythm and Actions

📖 ***Clap Your Hands*** by Lorinda Bryan Cauley; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; Boardbook $6.99. "Clap your hands, stomp your feet. Shake your arms, then take a seat." Read aloud then join your little one in roaring, wiggling, tickling and generally having a wonderful time. Happy-making illustrations filled with animals, boys and girls.

Science

📖 ***Dot & Jabber and the Great Acorn Mystery*** by Ellen Stoll Walsh; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, 2001; Hardcover, $15.00. The squirrels ponder the mystery of acorns and oak trees. For older preschoolers with an interest in nature.

📖 ***The Emperor's Egg*** by Martin Jenkins; illustrated by Jane Chapman; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover $16.99. A gently but seriously informative book about the wonderful Emperor penguin and how they raise their chicks.

■ ● ◆ Shapes

📖 ***When a Line Bends...A Shape Begins*** by Rhonda Gowler Greene; illustrated by James Kaczman; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1997; Softcover $5.95. Colorful illustrations incorporating ovals, triangles, stars, hearts, crescents as well as squares, circles etc.

📖 ***The Wing on a Flea: A book about shapes*** by Ed Emberley; Little, Brown & Company; Boston, 2001; Hardcover $15.95. Simple colorful drawings show the world around us in shapes. Circles and triangles, along with a couple of rectangles make up a dragon. Rectangles are all around in buildings and doors. It's also a wonderful introduction to how to draw using shapes.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

Copyright 2002; The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute/NSC&FGC. Printed in the USA.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

En Español

Volume 17 Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* June - 2002

Estar Listo Para la Escuela:

Quizás no es lo que Piensas

Jackie estaba preocupada de que su hijo de cuatro años no estuviera listo para kindergarten. Su cumpleaños era a fines de noviembre, convirtiéndolo en uno de los niños mas jóvenes del curso. Su profesora de pre-kindergarten, después que le dijo que su niño era muy dulce y querido por todos, le dijo a Jackie que no estaba listo para kindergarten. La profesora añadió que su hijo demostraba cierta inmadurez pero dio pocos aracterísticas tangibles de su desarrollo para ayudar a sus padres entender que quería decir.

Todas las amigas de Jackie le dijeron que lo "dejaran pegado" y le asegurararon que él sería el más inteligente de su curso porque estaría más adelantado que los otros. Jackie incluso fue a conversar con el director de la escuela primaria de su hijo. El director le aseguró que su hijo debiera estar con sus pares y que nunca sugerían retrasar a un niño. Jackie estaba confundida con toda esta información contradictoria y se angustió más sobre hacer una decisión que pudiese ser mala para su hijo.

Un administrador de la escuela llamó a una agencia de orientación de niños para obtener ayuda con un creciente numero de niños que estaban entrando a la escuela sin saber como ir al baño. El distrito escolar tenía cinco niños, y, no obstante, a que se estaban desarrollando normalmente, sus padres decían que su posición en cuanto a ir al baño era que los niños debían decidir cuando estaban listos.

A los niños les fue muy bien en sus entrevistas para kindergarten y parecían estar listos para el trabajo cognitivo de la escuela, pero el administrador dijo que ella no podía permitir que vinieran a la escuela en pañales.

Salina era una pequeña niña de cuatro años que le estaba costando mucho separarse de sus padres y seguía siendo sumamente tímida y ansiosa, incluso después de un año y medio en la pre-escuela. Un personal muy cooperativo y cariñoso medía el progreso de Salina en pequeños pasos, y lentamente esta pequeña y preocupada niña logró confiar en sus maestros.

El programa de estudios estaba basado en habilidades de juegos con mucho tiempo libre, arte y trabajos manuales para los niños. La tímida Salina tuvo poca interacción con sus compañeros. Ella claramente era mas una observadora que participante y tuvo poca vida social con sus amigas fuera de la escuela. La pre-escuela recomendó que Salina se quedara en su entorno por un año más aunque su cumpleaños en agosto la hacía uno de los niños mas maduros de su curso. Sus padres pensaban que su hija, quien había estado recibiendo servicios terapéuticos especiales debido a su extremas angustias de separación, no era como el resto de los niños y nunca estaría lista para las demandas del kindergarten. Los tres ejemplos son verdad y captan el complejo cuadro del desarrollo de los niños. Pero la escuela y estos padres tenían que hacer decisiones sobre si sus niños estaban listos para ir a la escuela y que significa estar listo.

Toda generación parece tener distintas expectativas para sus niños y las mediciones de desempeño ahora son una parte importante de la experiencia escolar. Ya que se presta tanta atención al éxito y fracaso académico de nuestros escolares, los padres han empezado a creer que estar listo para la escuela incluye una multiplicidad de materias aprendidas.

En realidad, la preparación para ir a la escuela depende del desarrollo de habilidades que le permitirán a los niños a estar preparados para que el profesor enseñe esas

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materias. Los niños no tienen que saber todo antes de empezar el kindergarten, pero tienen que haber desarrollado la capacidad de aprender. Estar listo para la escuela, a pesar de las enormes presiones que los padres e hijos experimentan para aprender información más rápidamente, antes y mejor que sus pares, está basada menos en como los niños de cuatro o cinco años memorizan el alfabeto y mucho más en su capacidad social, emocional y de desarrollo. Algunos de los aspectos de que quiere decir estar listo para ir a la escuela los puede sorprender.

Lo que los Niños Deben Saber

Muchos de los niños que son descritos como no aptos para empezar la escuela es falta su desarrollo social y emocional. Una reciente publicación de un consorcio nacional que promulga servicios de salud mental para niños aseveró, "...pocos saben lo que las investigaciones han recientemente confirmado: que estar listo para la escuela emocional y socialmente es absolutamente necesario para una transición exitosa al kindergarten, éxito temprano en el colegio, e incluso logros posteriores en el trabajo". (*A Good Beginning: Sending America's children to school with the social and emotional competence they need to succeed*, The Child Mental Health Foundations & Agencies Network; 2000, página vii). Las competencias que los niños deben manejar para convertirse en estudiantes exitosos en la escuela incluyen las siguientes:

La Capacidad de Confiar en los Adultos

El maestro es el jefe de la clase y los niños chicos tienen que haber aprendido a confiar en los adultos para poder seguir las orientaciones del profesor. Los niños tienen que creer que un profesor actuará de una manera protectora para que ellos puedan seguir las reglas de la clase. Ellos tienen que haber aprendido algún grado de separación para que puedan tolerar que el profesor le preste atención a sus compañeros. Los niños tienen que saber que los adultos pueden ser confiados en responder cuando se les pide ayuda para poder trabajar independientemente en su escritorio o mesa. Finalmente, los niños tienen que creer que recibirán la aprobación de los adultos por sus esfuerzos. Las recompensas de haber aprendido nuevas habilidades y que estas sean apreciadas por el maestro seguirán siendo una fuerte motivación para el aprendizaje a través de la experiencia colegial infantil.

Destrezas Sociales y Relaciones con sus Pares

Los niños tienen que saber como jugar entre si. Aprender a convivir con otros es una destreza clave de la vida y ciertamente no tiene que terminarse en kindergarten, pero los niños tienen que empezar a aprender la dinámica de la sociabilidad -actos de bondad, buenos modales, compartir, paciencia, ser asertivo, y especialmente pasarlo bien- todo esto es parte del mosaico de la comunicación entre pares. Los niños muy pocas veces llegan a la casa a contarle a los padres lo contento que están por que han aprendido dos números nuevos, pero si hablarán sobre quien se sentó a su lado durante el almuerzo, quien jugó con ellos en el patio de recreo y quien se rió de ellos en el bus de la escuela.

Las dinámicas sociales en la escuela pueden ser difíciles. Existe un caos natural que se desarrolla cuando hay docenas de niños libres durante el recreo. Los niños deben saber como entender esa falta de estructura. Los niños tímidos tienen que saber como encontrar los niños mas apacibles, como conversar con los niños mas extrovertidos, y como pedir ayuda cuando la necesitan. Los niños que no han aprendido a respetar los sentimientos de otras personas se encontraran con problemas desde un inicio. Pueden ser catalogados como "niños con problemas" cuando, de hecho, quizás simplemente no han aprendido las reglas importantes del juego. El kindergarten estará menos supervisado que el jardín infantil el pre-kindergarten y nuestros niños tendrán que saber como avenirse con otros.

Buena Salud Física y Destrezas de Salud

Los niños con condiciones médicas no tratadas, inestables o discapacidades no podrán utilizar adecuadamente el entorno de la escuela. Ausencias frecuentes, con recuperaciones más largas, todo esto interfiere con las oportunidades del niño para formar habilidades y tener éxito en la escuela. Exámenes médicos tempranos para descartar los principales obstáculos para el aprendizaje son extremadamente importantes. Exámenes auditivos y a la vista y un constante seguimiento a condiciones médicas persistentes (como el asma o infecciones crónicas al oído) pueden ser sumamente importantes para el éxito o fracaso.

Los profesionales de la temprana infancia y los padres deben hacer un seguimiento de los problemas del desarrollo y dar las mejores intervenciones posibles. Los niños que no pueden funcionar en un entorno escolar por razones de salud pueden interpretar sus problemas como sus propios fracasos personales.

Además, hábitos de higiene y de esmero personal (usar pañuelos desechables, lavarse las manos después de ir al baño, usar cubiertos para comer) son todas cosas importantes y aumentan la sensación del niño de competencia e independencia en el entorno del aula y de la escuela.

Salud Emocional y Seguridad

Los niños pequeños pueden tener sentimientos muy fuertes. Ellos también sufren cuando sus familias

luchan contra el estrés de la pobreza, enfermedad, migración, soledad, o la muerte y perdida de un ser querido. Los niños que son testigos de violencia, no solo en la pantalla de televisión, sino en sus hogares, patios o barrios serán mucho mas vulnerables y sentirán que nunca están realmente seguros. Los niños que no se sienten seguros en sus hogares, escuelas o comunidades estarán más preocupados y afligidos. Si están asustados de que les puede deparar al final de un pasillo o en la casa, les será mas difícil aprender y prestar atención al trabajo en la sala de clases.

Las presiones que enfrentan los niños son variadas. Un divorcio, un nuevo bebé, atención inadecuada y malas experiencias durante la infancia influyen en la capacidad del niño de ir a la escuela con ganas y estar preparados a prestar atención en la sala de clases.

Además, las habilidades para poder regular las emociones: usar palabras en vez de pegar o tirar cosas, recuperarse de ofensas a sus sentimientos, expresar necesidades, desarrollar tolerancia a la frustración, deben ser alentadas en esos niños que pueden desarrollar esas destrezas naturalmente o que pueden enseñárselas a los niños en la escuela.

La sala de clases es una experiencia colectiva y la escuela es una comunidad. El éxito en ambas depende en el establecimiento de reglas y metas comunes. Es la presencia de esa comprensión y expectativas comunes del entorno de la escuela que le permite a un profesor experimentado trabajar efectivamente.

Lo que Deben Hacer los Padres

Los padres y las personas que cuidan niños tienen un gran impacto en la preparación de sus niños para la escuela.

He aquí algunas cosas que hay que tener en mente:
* Observe a su hijo de tres o cuatro años en acción. Observe como juega con otros niños, preste atención para ver cuan bien te escuchan a ti y a otros adultos de su mundo.
* Observa como se están desarrollando en comparación a sus compañeros o a sus otros hijos.
* Si algo le parece preocupante o que simplemente no está bien, pregúntele a un profesional. Su pediatra, o las personas que cuidan sus niños, incluso la bibliotecaria que les lee cuentos tienen una impresión sobre como le está yendo a su hijo en un entorno específico. Si no estas satisfecha, hay especialistas en desarrollo infantil que los pueden ayudar a obtener una visión más clara de la debilidades y fortalezas de su niño.
* Trate de crear una atmósfera de seguridad en su casa, y eso incluye reglas claras sobre golpes, estar solo, y como los adultos y los niños deben hablarse entre sí. También tendrás que poder establecer límites sobre que es apropiado en cuanto a la televisión y el cine u otras actividades. Sus niños los molestarán hasta el cansancio cuando fijen reglas, pero se sentirán más seguros viviendo en un ambiente donde alguien le importa lo suficiente como para decir que "no" para protegerlos. Y funcionarán mejor fuera de casa.
* Cree oportunidades para aprender y hágale saber a sus niños que valorizas sus experiencias escolares, a pesar de que fue difícil para ti. Compartir música, visitar lugares interesantes en la comunidad, escuchar los cuentos de los familiares de más edad, leer o mirar libros ilustrados (en cualquier idioma) son todas maneras en que los padres le enseñan a sus niños que aprender sobre el mundo es una cosa positiva.
* Ayúdele a su hijo aprender sobre sentimientos y a desarrollar conductas apropiadas para expresarlos y manejarlos. Esto es la clave para que su hijo esté listo para estar en un entorno de grupo.
* Asegúrese que su escuela tenga un buen programa de kindergarten que es apropiado para niños pequeños. Visite la escuela a donde irá su hijo y pregúntele a los administradores y maestros que esperan de niños de cinco años y si su personal está capacitado para trabajar con niños pequeños.

Las salas de kindergarten no siempre son silenciosas. Debieran siempre estar zumbando con juegos y actividades organizadas. No tema preguntarle a la parvularia por qué planifica el programa de estudio de esa manera o cómo maneja a los niños que echan de menos el hogar. Si tienes la sensación de que algo no está bien, conversa con el director. Si una profesora parece demasiado relajada y poco estructurada quizás otra maestra sería una mejor opción. Si no te gusta estar en el edificio o la sala de clases, existe la posibilidad que a tu hijo tampoco le gustará.

En cuanto a las familias mencionadas en este artículo, Jackie está evaluando a su hijo. Estaba preocupada que los profesores de su hijo estaban detectando debilidades del desarrollo reales lo que haría la experiencia de la sala de clases difícil para él. Cuando tenga una visión más clara de sus fuerzas, ella y su marido van a decidir si su hijo está realmente listo para el kindergarten.

El distrito escolar conversó con los padres de los niños que aun no habían aprendido a ir al baño. En el verano antes que sus niños empezaran a ir al kindergarten, la escuela ofreció apoyo y consejos para ayudar a estos niños a estar listos para la escuela.

Salina tenía buen potencial académico pero estaba muy angustiada y abrumada en el poco estructurado jardín infantil. En todo caso, sus padres decidieron inscribir a su hija. Salina requirió mucho menos ayuda de lo que se había previsto y el aumento de estructura y el énfasis en actividades organizadas le hizo mas fácil encontrar oportunidades para el éxito. Salina habla orgullosamente sobre estar lista para entrar a la primera preparatoria.

Preparar a nuestros niños chicos para estar listos para la escuela colegio es algo que preocupa a los padres y a los profesionales. Pero con expectativas claras y apoyo apropiado, las familias y la escuela pueden trabajar juntos para ayudar a los niños a tener éxito en el aprendizaje.

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Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
© Copyright 2002 NSCFGC. Printed in the United States of America.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 7 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | July/August - 2002

Daily Discipline

Making It Less Frequent and More Effective

Recently my daughter and I visited my sister and her family in Washington state. As we drove up her driveway, I saw the little four-year-old neighbor boy, Scott, dart over into her yard. I knew Scott was over at the house a lot, playing with her girls. My niece Julia, age 4, immediately wailed, "No, Mommy! I just want to play with Catriel!" She was not willing to share her favorite cousin with her everyday friend. Scott had been waiting in his front yard for his friends to come home and was understandably disappointed they weren't available to play. He ran around the yard, being silly and inviting the others to play. His dad, watching from next door, called to his son to come home. Scott ignored him. Dad walked over, and again, told him to come home. Scott shouted, "No!" and ran from his reach. Dad chased him up a tree, then, exasperated (and probably mildly embarrassed) plucked him out and carried his wailing son home.

I felt compassion for Scott and his dad. It's hard to be four and not get to play with your favorite little friends. It's also hard to be a parent and keep calm when your preschooler gets openly defiant. Fortunately, there are several parenting tools that help in situations like these. The trick is knowing and practicing them regularly. With rules and consequences in place ahead of time, you can navigate such scenarios much more easily.

Have Rules

When certain problems crop up more than once or twice, a family rule is enormously helpful in preventing misbehavior. For example, when my son was three, I could count on a tantrum every single time I went to the store. He would invariably spot something he wanted and then beg for it. When I said "No," a full-blown tantrum would ensue. When my husband came home with him from the discount store one day holding a $20.00 dinosaur toy we didn't need, we finally sat down and came up with a family rule: *Parents buy toys for children on birthdays or holidays. Ordinary trips to the store are not for buying toys.*

Every time I pulled into the parking lot of a store after that, I would make eye contact with my son and say, "We're at the store today to buy paper towels and kitty litter. This is not a toy-buying day. If you are very good in the store (stay close to me and use a pleasant voice) then we will *look* in the toy aisle for five minutes. If you are not well-behaved, we won't even look." My son would solemnly promise to behave–and 99% of the time he would. If I ever forgot the reminder ahead of time, I was guaranteed a tantrum. By the time he was 4½, I could count on him to control himself in the store without any reminders.

Scott's dad could

have prevented his son's misbehavior (or reduced the problem significantly) by instituting a family rule: When the neighbors have company, you must come home.

What to Do When a Rule is Broken

Rules work even better if children know the consequence for breaking them ahead of time. Obviously you can't always know what kind of misbehavior a child will indulge in (they can be very creative) but many problems are repetitive. For those discipline problems that tend to reoccur, sit down and figure out a reasonable, related consequence for the misbehavior.

There are two kinds of consequences: natural and logical. Natural consequences happen without any parent intervention. For example, if you tease a cat, you get scratched. Logical consequences are imposed by adults but related to the offense.

If possible, tell your child about a logical consequence ahead of time. For example, when my son had the store-tantrum problem, I told him what the consequence would be for not controlling himself: no window shopping in the toy aisle. Other related consequences could be *If you beg at the store, the answer is automatically "No."* Or, *"If you beg at the store, you forfeit the next two shopping trips and must stay home with the other parent."*

Logical consequences work best if they are *related* to the misbehavior. Taking away dessert or TV that night would not be nearly as effective because dessert and TV (although fun privileges) are not logically related to the problem behavior of begging for toys.

Scott's dad might have set the following consequence for not coming home when the neighbors had company: If you don't come home, you are restricted from playing at the neighbor's house for 1-2 days. This consequence is related, and just as important, it *matters* to Scott, who dearly loves to play next door. If he wasn't all that fond of playing with the neighbors, it wouldn't do much to deter the misbehavior.

Consequences vs. Punishment

Most parents usually set consequences and occasionally punish without thinking much about it. There are, however, clear differences between the two.

A logical consequence aims to change the child's behavior through learning, relates logically to the misbehavior, and is delivered calmly and objectively by the adult.

A punishment aims to change the child's behavior through suffering or deprivation, is delivered angrily or emotionally, and can involve pain or humiliation. For example, punishments are things like spankings or angry comments such as, "Stop that! Why are you always such a pain? If you touch that again I'm going to smack you!" Educator Jane Nelson is fond of saying, "Children don't have to *suffer* to learn." Be aware that if a child is scared (and being screamed at or hit is scary) no learning takes place.

The goal of discipline is learning followed by a long-term change in behavior. Punishment changes behavior in a more short-term way. It will typically stop the misbehavior immediately, but it won't necessarily stop the behavior from happening again.

Making Amends as a Logical Consequence

I recommend parents teach their children how to make amends with people that they've hurt or imposed on. Making amends is a very logical consequence. I like using it because it helps children learn to think about the needs and rights of other people. It helps the child re-bond with the person s/he has wronged and it teaches that mistakes are something to be corrected. A preschooler will need your help and presence to make amends. Start the process by asking her, "What can you do to fix this?"

Let's say your daughter has played with her sister's necklace without permission and broken it. When you ask for her ideas on making amends, she might suggest giving her sister a hug, fixing the necklace, or buying her a new one. Most siblings aren't too impressed with a hug when a favorite item is broken, but it is certainly worth offering. If fixing the necklace is too complex for her, you might suggest that she help you or her dad to fix it or that she do one of your jobs to free you up to fix the necklace. If you must spend money to replace the necklace, your daughter can work off the debt to you by doing extra jobs (reasonable for her age and development). Other ways of making amends might be to offer her sister a necklace of her own or to make her sister a favorite brownie recipe.

There are two rules for helping your child make amends: your child must be willing to make amends (don't force her; if she's not remorseful and wanting to fix it, use a logical consequence instead) and the amends must be acceptable to the victim. In addition, make sure you are calm and not angry; any intense emotions on your part can sabotage the amends process. If you are too upset to facilitate the process, get your spouse to guide the child.

Catch Children Behaving Well

It only makes sense to notice and comment when you see your children behaving

well. Children do what gains them attention. If you pay more attention to misbehavior than good behavior, then you'll see your children misbehaving more often. If you pay a reasonable amount of attention to children getting along, playing well, responding to you promptly and pleasantly, you'll see more of that behavior. Affirmations like, "Hey great. You shared your crayons with your brother. I like to see that" or, "Good job playing quietly. I appreciate that you try not to wake the baby" or, "You're a good listener" are all ways of paying attention to good behavior. Another, more subtle way to give such affirmations is to let your child overhear you praising his behavior to another adult.

These comments, affirmations, and attention on your part are very important; they tell your child that you notice her strengths, efforts, and accomplishments as much, or more, than her shortcomings.

Affirmations for Being

Children not only need attention from you for getting along, they need affirmations for simply "being." A being-affirmation sounds like, "I'm so glad you're my child", "I love you", or "I'm glad you're here. I love spending time with you." Being affirmations can also be non-verbal: stroking your child's hair, a hug, or rubbing his back. When your children get older, leave love notes for them on their pillows, on the bathroom mirror, or in their lunches (today I wrote on my son's banana: "Remember, Mom loves you. Have a great lunch!")

There are many parenting tools that can help your day run more smoothly with a preschooler. Having rules, using consequences and making amends are three very useful techniques to have at your disposal.

Shari Steelsmith is the parent of three children, ages 12, 8, and 4. She is the author of over 10 books for parents and children–most recently, "Go To Your Room! Consequences That Teach," *© 2000, Raefield-Roberts/Parenting Press, 1-800-992-6657. Shari also writes regular parenting "Tip of the Week" articles for the website www.Parentingpress.com*

Questions to Think About

What situations and problems come up in your house on a regular basis?

Do you have rules for them?

What kind of rules could you develop that would be helpful?

Do you think you have too many rules?

Too few rules?

Or, just the right amount of rules?

How often does your youngster break a family rule?

What happens when a rule is broken? Do you generally use consequences or punishment?

How well does that seem to work? Is your child learning not to do that behavior?

If it isn't working, what other consequences can you impose?

Do you catch your children being good and compliment them?

When was the last time you told your youngster how much you enjoyed spending time together?

Dear Reader

Figuring out what to do in the midst of a crisis isn't easy. In fact, probably the worst time to try to come up with a sensible discipline plan is when your child is screaming in the supermarket and everyone is beginning to stare. But when things are quiet parents tend to be grateful, and think about something else.

This month Shari Steelsmith talks about discipline. It's particularly timely now that parents and children are spending more time together over the summer vacation, and hot weather threatens everyone's patience. Develop a discipline strategy now and when the tantrums come you'll be ready.

If you're thinking about road trips, Sandra Whiteside offers some good information about traveling with your pets.

The growing resistance of bacteria to once powerful drugs is threatening our health care. In our Health Corner the doctors at Winthrop University Hospital focus on treating colds, viral and bacterial infections.

This is our combined July/August issue so we'll see you again in September. Have a great, happy, and healthy summer.

Neala Schwartzberg

Having *(Serious)* Fun with Your Child

There are lots of ways you and your preschooler can enjoy being together. Here's a few of our favorites which add a touch of learning.

Go Togethers

Collect objects from around the house or the park. Find some that are identical, like nuts, shoes, socks, flowers. Others should be very different from one another.

Place the objects in a row in front of your little one and then work together to find the ones that are the same. While you do this help your child think aloud. Say things like "Hmmm, I wonder if we can find something that is the same color and shape." Or, "here's an interesting flower, is there another one that looks like it?" Give your child time to look carefully and select the match. If your youngster is finding this too difficult provide a bit more support so your child can see the similarities. You can also increase the difficulty by selecting similar-looking objects or organizing by function rather than appearance, for example, things we use to eat.

Shapers

This can be lots of fun to create and play. Cut out different shapes from colored construction paper. Make sure you have two of every color and shape. Arrange a simple design from those shapes and ask your youngster to make one just like it from the remaining shapes. Now, ask your youngster to make a design for you to reproduce. You can start with something simple like a square with a triangle on top to make a house and progress to more complicated designs.

Back Together

Cut out a picture from an old magazine and cut it into three to six pieces (depending on the age of your youngster). Now, ask your child to put it back together. If your little one is having a hard time, think aloud to provide help. For example, if it's a picture of a face you can say something like "Where would the eye go?" or "Yipes we have half a mouth, where's the other half?"

Draw a Story

Ask your youngster to tell you a simple story. Write it down. Now work with your child to draw three to five pictures (again depending on age) that depict the story. Mix them up and work with your child to put them back in the correct order.

As an alternative, sit down with your youngster and draw three to five pictures. Challenge your child to make up a story about what's happening in those pictures.

Home Swimming Pools & Kids

Summer is the time for swimming and water sports. It is also a time for parents to be especially vigilant. The Red Cross reports that drowning is the second leading cause of death in children under the age of five and that 65% of these children drowned in a family pool while one or both parents were "supervising." With home pools open and ready and summer swimming season in full swing, the American Red Cross offers the following suggestions:

- Every child and every adult should know how to swim. The best thing that anyone can do to stay safe in and around water is to learn how to swim. Children should be made "water safe" as soon as possible. Teach your baby water survival skills as soon as he is old enough to crawl or walk. Review these techniques with your little one every few weeks throughout the year so they are second nature to him and not forgotten from summer to summer. Your decision to provide your child with early aquatic lessons is a gift that will have infinite rewards - these courses encourage safe practices. The Red Cross has swimming classes for people of any age and ability. Call you local Red Cross chapter to enroll.
- Remember that every pool should be surrounded by fencing including a gate lock that is high up so a child is not able to reach it. Furniture should not be left near the fence, making it easy for a child to climb over. Keep toys, that might attract young children, away from the pool.
- Take a CPR course and be familiar with rescue techniques. Knowing these skills can be important around water and you will expand your capabilities in providing care for your child. You can contact your local Red Cross to enroll in a CPR for Infants and Children course.
- NEVER leave a child out of eye contact with an adult even for a moment. Never allow children to swim alone. Never rely on substitutes - the use of flotation devices or inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision. No matter what skills your child has or what training - no matter how shallow the water, never leave a child unsupervised.
- Always keep pool life-saving equipment near the pool. A pole, rope, and personal flotation devices are recommended. Also, always keep a cell phone next to the pool for emergencies.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts - stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- Be watchful for the dangerous "too's" - too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too strenuous activity. Always swim with a buddy who can observe these "too's" when you might not be aware of them yourself.

The American Red Cross has a 10 minute video available on home pool safety. Contact your local chapter and ask for the video *It Only Takes a Minute.*

Have a great summer under the sun and make your home swimming pool "child friendly" by knowing all of the rules and being ever watchful.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Antibiotics Yes or No?

***Scenario:** A mother brings her 5-year-old daughter to see her pediatrician in the middle of January. Her daughter's chief complaints are cough, stuffy nose, a sore throat, overall tiredness and a fever ranging from 102° F – 104° F (taken orally) which is controlled with Tylenol or Motrin but returns in a few hours. The mother would like her pediatrician to prescribe antibiotics for fear that her daughter may develop something more serious. The physician's examination does not reveal a bacterial source of infection and does not prescribe antibiotics.*

▪ This article will shed some light on why the pediatrician made a wise choice.

The symptoms this young girl has are very common for toddlers, children and teenagers during the winter months, but may also occur at other times of the year. Children, on average, will experience up to 6 upper respiratory infections (also known as the common cold) a year, which is approximately one cold every other month.

Viral Versus Bacterial Infections

The cause of most infections is a virus or a bacterium, but the use of antibiotics will only cure infections of bacterial origin. It will have no effect on infections of viral origin.

Several bacteria naturally exist (in balance) in certain parts of our body. When these bacteria travel outside of their natural environment and live in another part of the body, it will cause an infection. For example, when the bacteria that naturally exist in the intestinal tract and rectum become lodged in the urinary tract, it will cause a urinary tract infection requiring antibiotic treatment.

One of the most common bacteria that plague our winter season is Streptococcus, the cause of strep throat. It is highly contagious and certain individuals are more susceptible to the infection than others. The incidence of strep throat occurring in children under the age of 2 years is less than 3%, which may increase if there is direct exposure to the organism. Strep throat can easily be cured with appropriate antibiotic coverage.

It is more common for a virus to infect our body, rather than a bacterium. The reason for this is that our body has natural defenses that protect us from the harmful effects bacterial organisms. But viri also have complex genetic structures with the capability of mutating frequently. Each new strain may cause similar symptoms of prior strains. These new strains however will not be recognized by our body's defenses, thus allowing individuals to become repeatedly infected by a similar virus.

A variety of viri exist in our environment. The viri of the winter months generally tend to cause upper respiratory tract symptoms and those of the summer months typically cause vomiting and diarrhea.

The symptoms of viri and bacteria infection tend to overlap with the exception of a few distinctive clinical disorders, for example chicken pox and fifth's disease (both viral infections). In the absence of these distinctive features, one of the most useful laboratory tests is a bacterial culture. The results of this test will be available in one to three days, depending on the specimen provided, and will determine if the infection is of viral or bacterial origin.

The Serious Problem of Ineffective Antibiotics

Inappropriate use of antibiotics contributes to the growing problem of bacterial resistance. In order to understand bacterial resistance, it is important to understand how antibiotics function.

The action of antibiotics is to either attack the cell wall of the bacteria or alter/inhibit the synthesis of essential proteins needed for replication of the bacteria, creating a hostile environment for the bacteria to exist. By nature, bacteria have the capability of adapting to a hostile environment either by changing their structure or by enhancing their defense mechanisms.

Over a period of time, the bacteria will become resistant to antibiotics that were once highly effective. When this occurs, physicians are forced to use stronger or multiple antibiotics to cure common bacterial infections. It is important to approach bacterial infections in a methodical and systematic manner; this is the only mode to effectively minimize bacterial resistance.

Over the course of time, a child's immunity will strengthen and he or she will eventually become less susceptible to certain infections. Most viral infections are acquired through airborne spread or via direct contact from individual to individual. You can use some simple methods to try and keep your children healthy throughout the year: frequent hand washing; getting the "flu shot" when indicated; keeping immunizations up to date; and maintaining good personal hygiene.

Viral illnesses are generally self-limited and most resolve with out any long-term consequences in 5-7 days. The most important treatment needed for viral illnesses is rest, plenty of liquids in order to prevent dehydration, and adequate fever control with appropriately dosed Tylenol or Motrin.

Dr. Deepti Dev
Dr. Len Krilov
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July 4th Independence Day

The colonists of the country that would become the United States of America had many complaints and grievances against the King. When their complaints went unanswered and unresolved, resentment grew. The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1776 to draft a document that would end ties with Great Briain. On July 4th, 1776 they unanimously adopted the Declaration of Independence, one of our most beloved and cherished documents.

Here's the beginning to this historic document (with original formatting and spelling).

When, in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume, among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's GOD entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their CREATOR, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenver any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that Governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a history of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

What followed was a list of grievances against the King. The Declaration of Independence ends with the following paragraph.

WE, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connexion between them and the STATE OF GREAT Britain, is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT TATES may of Right do. And for the Support of this Declaration, with firm Reliance on the Protection of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Observing the anniversary of this historic signing didn't become a custom until after the War of 1812. But soon major events, such as the ground-breaking ceremonies for the Erie Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, were scheduled for July 4th festivities, beginning a long and continuing tradition of celebration that continues to this day.

THE PET STOP

Vacationing with your Pet

It's vacation season and your pet is part of the family. What to do? If you have kids, life may be complicated enough on vacation without adding another responsibility. But, you may be considering whether to include this "family member" in the next vacation.

If you are considering this, answer this question honestly: *"Do both parents really agree about an animal being part of the vacation package?"* If one partner can't part with the pet and the other is dead set against the idea, you are heading for big trouble.

The pet-lover won't win if the difficulties encountered (dog throws up in the car; kitty escapes into the woods) gives the family an excuse to say: "I told you so!" during the entire vacation. Here are some questions to consider:

- Does your pet enjoy travel or staying in a place that is not his/her own home? (Maybe a "dress rehearsal" is in order - an overnight stay at a relative's home?)
- Does the pet get car/air travel sick? (You can test out the car travel part and can discuss air travel with your pet's vet.) If traveling by air, what are the airlines' policies regarding animal travel? Will your pet be safe? How much will it cost?
- Have you done your research regarding hotels and resorts? Remember that pet-friendly hotels and resorts usually have special requirements for pets. Always call ahead and get policy statements about pets in writing. Some places only allow "small dogs" or "quiet pets." You need to know just exactly what that means.
- What "pet-sitting" facilities does the hotel or resort have? What if you want to go to a place that doesn't allow pets? Is there an animal care facility nearby if you can't leave the pet in your room?

If you do decide to bring your pet along on vacation here are some tips to help make the trip easier:

- Safety first - in any vehicle dogs should wear a travel harness which is secured to a seat belt or travel crate. Pets need to be secured as they will fly through the air just like a child if the car stops fast or has an accident. Never allow a dog to stick his head out of the window of a moving car. They love it, but his eyes and ears really are not equipped to deal with high speeds, winds, and flying debris. Cats must be restrained in a carrier whenever the vehicle is in motion. A kitten hiding under a brake pedal is a recipe for disaster. Even when the vehicle is stopped, cats should only be allowed out of their carrier if on a cat leash. Many cats have slipped out of a car in a gas station and frightened and disoriented, are lost forever or killed on the highway. Same with dogs.
- Get your pet a complete health check-up just before the trip and make sure to have a health certificate from your pet's vet with you at all times. Be sure that your pet has flea/tick protection applied before you leave. And, very important, remember to have your pet's rabies inoculation certificate with you as well.
- Be sure that your pet and your pet's carrier both have proper identification on them at all times. Also, include information on where you can be reached while on vacation (perhaps your cell phone number).
- Take a first-aid kit for your pets. This should include cotton balls, gauze, material to make a splint, hydrogen peroxide (3% solution), muzzle, small emergency ice pack, and other special items your pet needs. Discuss the contents of your first-aid kit with your pet's vet. Remember to allow your pet to "use the facilities" often and on a regular basis. Allow for much-needed exercise time as well. If your pet tends to be slightly nervous or anxious, take along a favorite toy or blanket. A very nervous animal should never be taken on vacation.
- Always carry fresh water, disposable litter box (for cats), regular food (no junk food for pets while on vacation unless you enjoy cleaning up vomit from car seats), grooming brushes and any other equipment that your pet will need to be comfortable. Remember that the key for easy pet travel is for the pet to feel relaxed and serene - the familiar is always soothing. Brushing a dog that is used to regular grooming rituals will keep him cool, calm, and collected.
- Important: A car becomes an "oven" very quickly in the summer. Never leave a pet alone in a car for any reason.

For more information on traveling with your pets:

- Log on to www.petplace.com for a wide array of resources
- ***Vacationing with your Pet***; by Eileen Barish; Pet Friendly Publications; Scottsdale, Az.; 2001; Paperback $19.95. From fancy to casual, this book lists 25,000 pet-friendly hotels, B&B's, lodgings, and resorts. This book is user-friendly and makes things much easier for those traveling with animals. Along with the lodgings, the book also offers a section on special places to stay; traveling with older pets and young pets and their differing needs; hotel and motel policies; travel by car; travel by plane; special needs of cats; pet behavior information; first aid; pet stress and travel; and more. This book is a must for anyone considering a vacation with their pets.

If you decide that your special pet shouldn't go along on vacation, research boarding facilities carefully or perhaps arrange for a pet-sitting swap with a friend or relative.

Whatever you decide, your special friend will either enjoy the trip or lovingly welcome you home on your return!

Happy vacation!

Sandra Whiteside, ACSW

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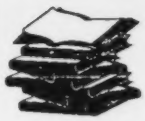

Books with a Message

📖 ***Big and Noisy Simon*** by Joseph Wallace; illustrated by Kevin O'Malley; Hyperion Books for Children; New York; 2001; Hardcover, $15.99. Simon was bigger and noisier than almost everyone. His parents take him on a trip to Africa and one night he sees the big and noisy elephants being quiet. So quiet that the only sound "was the whisper of the tall grass brushing against the elephants' sides as they moved slowly past." Simon is still noisy, but he's also learned he can sometimes choose to be quiet, like the elephants.

📖 ***Froggy Eats Out*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz; Viking; New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. It's hard for a young frog to be quiet in a fancy restaurant. Froggy tries, but he still makes a mess and disrupts dinner for the other patrons. Finally, his parents realize that taking him to a nice restaurant just won't work. Instead they go to a "fast flies" place.

📖 ***Hands Are Not for Hitting*** by Martine Agassi, Ph.D.; Free Spirit Publishing; Minneapolis, MN; 2000; Softcover $10.95. Hands can do all kinds of things. They can wave "hello," communicate love and friendship, and more. Sometimes people use hands to hurt, but hands are not for hitting. The book is a thorough but gentle reminder of that important lesson. The end of the book contains a note to grown-ups about how to use the book with youngsters.

📖 ***The Happy Hedgehog*** by Marcus Pfister; North-South Books, Inc.; New York; 2000; Hardcover $15.95. Mikko loves his garden and knows every flower, herb, and even the weeds by name. He knows the birds and the insects by sight and by song. His grandfather doesn't approve of Mikko's activities. He wants Mikko to be industrious. Mikko finds animals working hard but he doesn't find anyone who's happy; a book with a different message.

📖 ***I am Not Sleepy and I Will Not go to Bed*** by Lauren Child; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 2001; Hardcover $16.99. It's the story of Charlie, charged with the task of getting his sister to bed, and Lola, who likes to stay up late. Charlie's endless patience and good humor eventually win.

📖 ***King Midas and the Golden Touch*** told by Charlotte Craft; illustrated by K.Y. Craft; Morrow Junior Books; New York; 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. The often-told story of greedy King Midas who wished for endless gold. In this version, he is allowed to relinquish his ability to turn all he touches into gold and is able to turn the statue of his daughter back into the living child.

📖 ***Our Marching Band*** by Lloyd Moss; illustrated by Diana Cain Bluthenthal; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. Each of the kids in the neighborhood decides to learn to play a different instrument. They create a cacophony that stuns the neighborhood. The kids persevere and improve, becoming so good, they play in the town's 4th of July parade. A nice book about the importance of striving, working, and cooperation.

📖 ***The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark*** by Jill Tomlinson; illustrated by Paul Howard; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 2001; Hardcover $15.99. Plop, the baby owl, is afraid of the dark. After talking to new friends he finally sees the night as a place fun, beauty, and wonder. Gentle text and luminous illustrations make this a perfect book for children afraid of the night.

📖 ***Scared Stiff*** by Katie Davis; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA; 2001; Hardcover $15.00. Poor Katie is terrified of almost everything: snakes in the closet, monsters in the bushes, giant killer dog. A humorous but gentle approach that has Katie realizing at the end that the snakes were shoelaces, the monsters were branches, and the killer dog was a mama and her puppies.

📖 ***Toot & Puddle: You are my sunshine*** by Holly Hobbie; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, MA; 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. Toot is moping and his friends try everything to cheer him up. It isn't until a ferocious thunderstorm clears the air, leaving it fresher and somehow crisp and new, that Toot reverts back to his cheerful self.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

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Volume 17 Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* July/August - 2002

Disciplina Diaria

Menos Frecuente y Más Efectiva

Recientemente mi hija y yo visitamos a mi hermana en el estado de Washington. Cuando llegábamos a su casa, vi a Scott, el niño vecino de cuatro años correr hacia el patio de mi hermana. Yo sabía que Scott pasaba mucho tiempo en su casa jugando con sus hijas. Mi sobrina Julia, de cuatro años, inmediatamente chilló, ¡"No, mamá! Yo solo quiero jugar con Carla"! Ella no estaba dispuesta a compartir a su prima favorita con su amigo de todos los días. Scott había estado esperando en su patio que llegaran sus amigos a casa y se decepcionó cuando no pudieron jugar. Corría por el patio, actuando como necio e invitando a otros a jugar. Su padre, que miraba desde al lado, lo llamó para que volviera a casa. Scott lo ignoró. Su papá caminó hacia él, y una vez mas le dijo que se fuera a su casa. Scott gritó ¡"No"! y se alejó de él. Su papá lo persiguió hasta un árbol y, entonces, fastidiado (y seguramente un poco avergonzado) lo bajó del árbol y se lo llevó aullando a la casa.

Sentí compasión por Scott y su papá. Es difícil tener cuatro años y no poder jugar con tus amigos favoritos. También es difícil ser padre y mantener la calma cuando tu niño preescolar se pone abiertamente desafiante. Afortunadamente, hay varias herramientas que le pueden servir a los padres en situaciones como estas. El truco es conocerlas y practicarlas periódicamente. Con reglas y consecuencias que existen de antemano, uno puede navegar estas situaciones mucho mas fácilmente.

Tenga Reglas

Cuando ciertos problemas surgen mas de una o dos veces, una regla de familia es sumamente importante para evitar mala conducta. Por ejemplo, cuando mi hijo tenía tres, yo podía estar segura de que iba a tener una pataleta cada vez que iba a la tienda. Era seguro que el detectaría algo que quería y después se dedicaba a mendigarlo. Cuando yo decía ¡"No"! se desataba una pataleta completa. Cuando mi marido llegó a la casa con él después de haber ido a una tienda de descuentos con un dinosaurio de $20.00 que no necesitábamos, finalmente nos sentamos y formulamos una regla familiar: los padres compran juguetes a los niños para sus cumpleaños o fiestas. Viajes de rutina a la tienda no son para comprar juguetes.

Después, cada vez que entraba en un estacionamiento de una tienda, yo establecía contacto visual con mi hijo y le decía, "Hoy estamos en la tienda para comprar toallas de papel y comida para el gato. Este no es un día para comprar juguetes. Si eres muy bueno en la tienda (quédate cerca mío y usa un tono de voz agradable) iremos a mirar los juguetes por cinco minutos. Si no te portas bien, ni siquiera miraremos". Mi hijo prometía solemnemente que se portaría bien -y el 99% de las veces lo hacía. Si a mi se me olvida recordarle de antemano, tenía una pataleta garantizada. Cuando tenía 4 años u medio, yo podía estar segura que se portaría bien sin necesidad de recordarle.

El padre de Scott podría haber evitado que su hijo e portara mal (o haber disminuido el problema sustancialmente) instituyendo una regla familiar: cuando los vecinos tienen visitas, tu tienes que irte a tu casa.

Que hacer cuando se quiebra una regla

Las reglas funcionan mejor si los niños saben las consecuencias de quebrarlas de antemano. Evidentemente que uno puede saber que tipo de malas conductas va a llevar a cabo un niño -ellos pueden ser muy creativos- pero muchos de los problemas se repiten. Para esos problemas de disciplina que tienden a repetirse, siéntese y dilucide una consecuencia razonable y relacionada al episodio de indisciplina.

Hay dos tipo de consecuencias: naturales y lógicas. Las consecuencias naturales ocurren sin ninguna intervención de los padres. Por ejemplo, si tu molestas al gato, el gato te va a arañar. Las consecuencias lógicas son impuestas por los adultos pero están relacionadas a la falta. Si es posible, cuéntele a su niño sobre una consecuencia lógica de antemano. Por ejemplo, cuando mi hijo tenía el problemas de las pataletas en las tiendas, yo le dije cual sería la consecuencia de no poder controlarse: no podía ir a mirar la sección juguetes. Otra consecuencia relacionada podría ser que si mendigas en la tienda la respuesta esautomáticamente "no". O, "Si mendigas en la tienda, tu pierdes tu derecho a los próximos dos viajes de compras y te tienes que quedar en la casa con el otro padre".

Las consecuencias lógicas funcionan mejor si están relacionadas a los actos de mala conducta. Prohibir el postre o la televisión esa noche no es tan eficaz porque el postre y la televisión (aunque son buenos privilegios) no están lógicamente relacionados al problema de la conducta de mendigar juguetes.

El padre de Scott podría haber fijado las siguientes consecuencias por no haber regresado a casa cuando los vecinos tienen visitas: si no vuelves a la casa quedas prohibido de jugar en la casa del vecino por uno o dos días. Esta consecuencia está relacionada, e igualmente importante, es importante para Scott, a quien le encanta jugar en la casa del al lado. Si no le gustara tanto jugar con los vecinos, no haría mucho para disuadir la mala conducta.

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Consecuencias versus Castigo

La mayoría de los padres ponen consecuencias y ocasionalmente castigan sin pensarlo mucho. Hay, sin embargo, claras diferencias entre ambas cosas.

Una consecuencia lógica trata de cambiar la conducta del niño a través del aprendizaje, relacionándose lógicamente a la mala conducta, y es otorgada con calma y objetividad por el adulto. Un castigo intenta cambiar la conducta del niño a través del sufrimiento y la privación, y es entregada con emoción y rabia, y puede también involucrar dolor y humillación. Por ejemplo, los castigos son cosas como las palmadas y comentarios exasperados como ¡"Deja de hacer eso"! ¿"Por qué siempre eres tan difícil"? ¡Si tocas eso otra vez te voy a pegar"! A la pedagoga Jane Nelson le gusta decir, "Los niños no tienen que sufrir para aprender". Tenga conciencia que si un niño está asustado (y que a uno le griten y le peguen asusta) no habrá aprendizaje.

La meta de la disciplina es el aprendizaje acompañado por cambio de conducta a largo plazo. El castigo cambia la conducta a mas corto plazo. Generalmente va ha detener la mala conducta inmediatamente, pero no hará que esta conducta nunca más se repita.

Remediar como consecuencia lógica

Yo recomiendo a los padres que le enseñen a sus niños como remediar a personas que han hendo o de las cuales se han aprovechado. Remediar es una consecuencia muy lógica. Me gusta usarla porque le ayuda a los niños a pensar sobre las necesidades y derechos de otras personas. Le ayuda a los niños a revincularse con la persona que han agraviado y enseña que los errores son cosas que deben ser corregidas. Un preescolar va a necesitar su ayuda y presencia para poder remediar la situacion. Comienze el proceso preguntandole "que puedes hacer para remediar esto"?

Digamos que su hija ha jugado con el collar de su hermana sin su permiso y lo rompió. Cuando le preguntas sobre sus ideas para poder remediar las cosas, ella quizás sugiere darle un abrazo a su hermana, arreglar el collar, o comprarle uno nuevo. La mayoría de las hermanas no quedan muy impresionadas con un abrazo cuando su objeto favorito ha sido roto, pero ciertamente vale la pena intentarlo. Si arreglar el collar es demasiado complejo para ella, puede sugerirle que te ayude a ti o a su papá a arreglar el collar. Si tu debes gastar dinero para reemplazar el collar, tu hija puede hacer trabajos en la casa adicionales (algo que sea razonable para su edad y desarrollo) para repagar la deuda. Otra manera de remediar puede ser ofrecerle a la hermana su propio collar o de hacerle su receta favorita de galletas.

Hay dos reglas para ayudar a sus hijos a remediar: su hija debe estar dispuesta a remediar (no la obligue -si no tiene remordimientos y no quiere arreglar las cosas, use una consecuencia lógica) y, además, los compensaciones deben ser aceptables para la victima. Además, asegúrese que estés tranquila y no enojada; cualquier emoción intensa de su parte puede sabotear el proceso de remediar. Si estás demasiado enojada para facilitar el proceso, haz que tu pareja guié al niño.

Sorprenda a sus niños portándose bien

Tiene sentido notar y comentado cuando sus niños se portan bien. Los niños hacen las cosas que le hace obtener atención. Si le prestas mas atención a la mala conducta que a la buena, entonces verás que tus niños se portan mal más frecuentemente. Si le prestas una cantidad de atención razonable a los niños que estín congeniando, jugando bien, respondiendo rápida y amablemente, verás mas de esa conducta. Afirmaciones como, "Muy bien. Compartiste tus lápices con tu hermano. Me encanta ver eso" o, "Muy bien que juegues silenciosamente. Te lo agradezco cuando tratas de no despertar al bebé" o "Tu sabes escuchar" son todas maneras de prestar atención a la buena conducta. Otra manera más sutil de hacer esas afirmaciones es dejar a tu niño escucharte mientas alabas su buena conducta a otro adulto.

Estos comentarios, afirmaciones, y atención de tu parte son muy importantes: le dicen a tus niños que notas sus cosas positivas, esfuerzo y logros tanto, o más, que sus defectos.

Afirmaciones por ser

Los niños no solo necesitan atención de ti para congeniar, necesitan confirmación por simplemente "ser". Una afirmación-ser pude ser, "Estoy tan feliz que eres mi hijo", "Te quiero", o "Estoy tan contenta que estés aquí. Me encanta estar contigo". Afirmaciones-ser también pueden ser no verbales: acaricíade el pelo, un abrazo, o hacede masajes en la espalda. Cuando tus niños tengan mas edad, déjale notas de amor en sus almohadas, en el espejo del baño, o en sus almuerzos (hoy escribí en el banano de mi hijo: "Recuerda que tu mami te quiere. ¡Ten un almuerzo maravilloso"!).

Hay muchas herramientas que pueden ser útiles para que tu día sea mas fácil con tu niño preescolar. Tener reglas, usar consecuencias y remediar son tres técnicas útiles que valen la pena tener a mano.

Cosas en qué pensar

¿Qué situaciones y problemas surgen en tu casa regularmente? ¿Tienes reglas para esos? ¿Qué tipo de reglas podrías desarrollar que serían útiles? ¿Crees que tienes muchas reglas? Muy pocas? O la cantidad exacta? ¿Cuan frecuentemente su niño infringe una regla familiar? ¿Qué pasa cuando la regla es infringida? ¿Generalmente usas consecuencias o castigos? ¿Cuan bien parece funcionar? Su niño está aprendiendo a no seguir usando esa conducta? ¿Si no está funcionando, qué otras consecuencias puedes imponer? ¿Sorprendes a tus hijos portándose bien y los halagas? ¿Cuando fue la ultima vez que le dijiste a tu niño que gozabas de estar con él?

Sheri Steelsmith es la madre de tres niños de 12, 8 y 4. Ellas es la autora de más de diez libros para padres y niños -el mas reciente, "Go To Your Room! Consequences That Teach, **©** *2000, Rayfield Roberts/ Parenting Press, 1-800-992-6657. Sheri también escribe artículos regulars "Tip of the Week" sobre ser padres para el sitio Web www.Parentingpress.com*

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Illustrations
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-993-9365
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Fax: (516) 626-0043
www.northshorechildfamily.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
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Postage Per Year.
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Volume 17 Number 8 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* September - 2002

Parenting: Some Stuff You Really Do Need to Know

Parenting is tricky business, being both more and less of what was promised. Raising kids is three or four gazillion times harder than anyone described. And loving them, well, loving them is easier and more magical than you could have hoped.

But even kids and parents with good hearts and good intentions sometimes go through very hard times. Parents who are diligent in their thoughtfulness and responsiveness to their children, who carefully attend to the details of their children's lives, don't always have the kind of results that they dreamed of, and kids don't always have the success they thought would come their way.

I have always felt quite self-conscious about my parenting of my children in public. As a social worker raising three kids, who lectures and consults on parenting and child development I have tried to stay away from communities and schools that really know me and my family. They would have seen the tantrums, the fights, the excess of fast food, and the not so clean sweat pants that characterize my non-working life. They would have seen me scowling in my car, late for some play group, listening to someone scream "get him off me!" from the back seat. They might have walked into the hurricane we fondly call the front hall, and been assaulted by shoes, sneakers and backpacks and wondered who was in charge here?

Growing up is hard work, not just for kids but for parents as well. The work of parents goes beyond the basics that we all know (and doesn't necessarily include spending a fortune on the hottest new doll or game though your children will swear they will love you forever for it). Getting this parenting job done right, raising emotionally healthy children, is not a simple equation of good stuff in, great stuff out. There are certain skills that parents need to develop to assure better odds for better outcomes for everyone.

Patience and Persistence

When I first began to work with families who were in crisis, I was struck by how hard many parents seemed to work to manage their child's behavior. What I also realized, however, was that parents quickly became frustrated with their child's often negative behavior.

I saw over and over again that a child's stubborn or difficult behavior persisted, but the patient, purposeful behavior of the parent did not. Parents joke that their children wear them down, but out of frustration and exhaustion parents often do give way to the strong force of a demanding five-year-old. In other words, we give up way before they do, and that ends up causing us even more problems.

A thousand times a week we have to count, take deep breaths, dream of vacations of hot sun and cold drinks, and then

still hang in there with toddler tantrums, or painful shyness, or chaotic backpacks, or picky, picky eaters.

The real truth about kids is that they haven't necessarily chosen to be as dawdling, temperamental, clumsy, or disorganized as they appear. They didn't choose to suddenly get phobic about the potty or lightening. It's not their fault that their older brother just went off to camp and the house is so lonely. Kids have all sorts of rough edges and tough feelings and they don't seem to understand them any better than we do. They just know how to display these feelings in confusing and challenging behaviors, and hope that the grown-ups around them will figure out what they really need.

We have to be patient with our kids when they can't communicate clearly, and with ourselves for not always figuring out their language. And we need to be able to hang in there when they really need our help providing loving but firm guidelines and rules.

Consistency

If you want your child to learn how to play soccer, the first thing you do is teach the rules. You want to play Chutes & Ladders as a family, you sit down and learn the rules. Well, the same is true for everything else in life.

There are rules of behavior such as: you don't invite sixteen kids from your preschool class to your party and leave just two kids out; you don't hit someone just because you feel like it; you don't wean your daughter off her bottle, and relent and give it back, and then get angry and take it away, and then feel guilty and give it back, again.

If you want your child to learn a rule, or change a behavior, you have to be prepared to be predictable and consistent. Later on, when your kids know table manners and when to have dessert, you can let your six-year-old-twins have ice cream and fruit for dinner and consider it an unique twist of the food pyramid. When nighttime rituals and sleeping routines are established you may decide to let your kids stretch their bedtime because everyone is enjoying a special relative's visit. But when it matters, when you are teaching the importance of a new rule, behavior, or habit, you have to be the grouch who spoils the party.

Self-Awareness

Like many other parents, I have always felt that my kids have dragged me kicking and screaming into adulthood. I didn't have babies because I was a grown-up; my babies made me a grown-up.

Along with the sense of responsibility and selflessness that seems to be a necessary job requirement for parents, in addition to becoming proficent at diagnosing an ear infection, and learning to be a creative birthday party planner, I have had to become smarter about me.

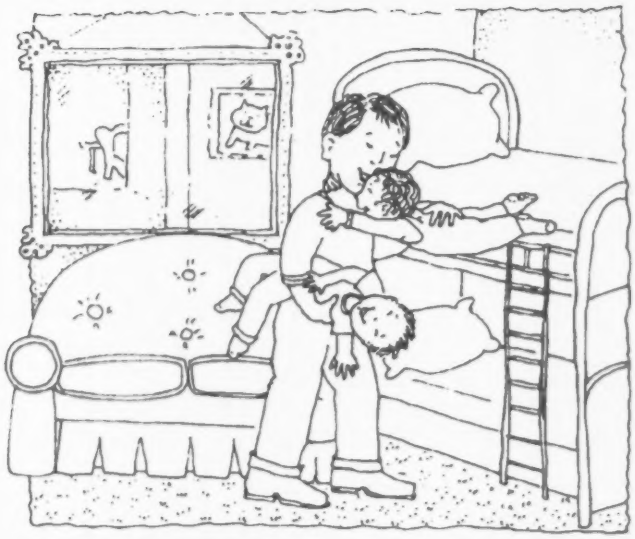
There are two special reasons for being aware of your emotions, needs and thoughts. The first is that your kids will start "pushing your buttons" before you realize it. You may get angry at your four-month-old for not sleeping through the night, at your toddler who always runs for the steps, sending you flying over his pile of toys as you try to catch him, or your seven-year-old who can't seem to remember a homework assignment for even twenty minutes after school ends. You're going to have to know how to read your own warning signs before you lose your temper, or even worse, your judgment.

Besides, being aware of our own emotions is the best insurance we have to help us take care of our kid's emotions. Over the years, I have learned that I yell loudest at my kids when I am scared, not angry. I am grumpiest when I'm overwhelmed and I really don't have a clue how to get three kids to four different places, even with two cars and two parents. I am most short-tempered not when they are the neediest, but when I am. Having some clue about what sends me over the edge helps me stop my kids from tumbling over with me.

Reason number two for why self-awareness is really important, is that, sooner or later, your kids will leave you, and it would be really nice to have something to show for it besides their accomplishments and your gray hair.

For grown-ups, even this "feel good about me" stuff is work. It doesn't just mean making sure that we have time to read a book, take a walk, or a nap. It can mean looking at our relationships with our own parents, or our partners, how we feel about our work, and our community.

It also means taking the time to be thoughtful about our words and actions, and taking the responsibility for them as well. Parents who have learned, or are learning, the words to express and manage their own thoughts and feelings will have an easier time teaching it to their children.



Sense of Humor and Perspective

I know you have heard it a thousand times, but it is still true – it's essential to keep enough of a perspective on what's going on around you to laugh (or try to), or to believe that this tantrum, like a summer storm, will knock you over and then quickly move on.

I do believe there is a connection between laughter and hope. My kids get scared when they see how seriously we respond to an event, and worried when they see me stew about behavior or misdeeds they have already forgotten. They always feel better when I relieve the worry and tension with a smile or a joke, just as their humor and warmth bring me back to life when I am overwhelmed.

When I can laugh about my mistakes, and occasionally even theirs, they learn somehow to believe that maybe next time it will be better. Rather than getting stuck on your anger at them and their anger at themselves, they may learn about the possibility for change (and improvement) as well as consequences.

You may have noticed that I have not yet used the word "happy" in describing what parents need to keep in mind as they try to master emotionally healthy parenting. I have, on more than two or three hundred occasions, turned myself inside out trying to make a child happy. I'm not talking about wiping the tears from their faces when they get frightened by the loud pop of a burst balloon, or the long talk when they find out they didn't make the final cut for the team. Comfort and consolation are great gifts, and are always needed.

No, I'm talking about taking on the Herculean task of thinking we can prevent all of life's hurts and disappointments. If we believe that we should protect our children from life's pain; that we can quickly flush the fish down the toilet, rebuild the dollhouse, speak to the coach about how she's playing our child on the team, and avoid telling the truth about grandma dying because we believe that we have to keep them happy, then we will never help our kids build the strength and skills they will need to manage their lives.

Protecting them too much makes them into an "emotional couch potatoes"–out of shape and not fit to cope with much of anything.

So How Do We Rate?

Most parents have a mixture of good and bad days, and some natural talents in the parenting department. The trick is to be patient long enough to find them. Parents who find infants adorable but a bit dull can find a two-year-old anything but terrible. The endless inquisitiveness of a four-year-old gives way to the first scent of the humor of a six-year-old. Just when you think you got it right and you understand your children, they seem to move beyond your ability to understand them, one more time.

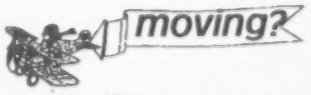
But it does seem that healthier families seem to work at getting better at their jobs, correcting and learning from their mistakes, and moving on from their failures.

Unfortunately for us, it is the exhausting job of parents to guide, shape, and teach children how to cope through the yucky times and confusing emotions. That's how children learn and grow.

It is important to keep in mind that building the emotional health of our children is not a static event, written in stone. It is built, like a carefully crafted mosaic, tile by tile and color by color, over a very long time. We need to keep in mind that our children get healthier and stronger because of many different factors. Their emotional health, like their physical health, has genetic and environmental influences, and sometimes even luck seems to have a part. All families, parents and children, need to feel that they are doing a "good enough" job... and remember to forgive each other for not being perfect.

Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW, is the Director of the Marks Family Right from the Start 0-3⁺ Center of North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center. A freelance writer and early childhood specialist for more that 25 years, Ms. Wolkoff is a nationally recognized educator and consultant.

↳ An earlier version of this article appeared in *Long Island Parenting.*



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And... remember to advise your old and new Post Office as well.

Dear Reader

I don't think there's anything easy about raising children, although until we have them I don't think we truly realize the extent of the responsibility we've blissfully assumed. Perhaps that's a good thing. But I've found that the whole process is made easier by knowing that other parents are struggling too.

This month Sandy Wolkoff, CSW, one of our favorite writers, is back with advice, compassion, and commiseration. Just having Sandy standing next to me while I'm contending with a screaming toddler, even through the medium of print, would make me feel a whole lot better.

It was also this month, a year ago, that the World Trade Center was destroyed in a terrorist attack. Sandy also talks briefly about echoes – old memories, fears, and concerns surfacing once again.

Our Library Resources reviews books on common, and not so common, dilemmas faced by parents and children. We've got the Craft Corner, and an article by Bill Brown (who I always think of as *Botany Bill*) on container gardens – a perfect fall activity for the family.

Heide Schwartzberg

Have Fun with Your Food

"Don't play with your food" may have been heard by thousands of children growing up, but here's food that's also hands (sandwiches), spiders (cookies), pieces of clothing (cakes), footballs (meatloaf), and more. A book of pure fun and whimsey.

In case you don't think food can really be whimsical and amusing, here's an example to make with your youngsters. Have fun with your food. And who knows, your kids might ask for extra helpings.

Monkey Pops

The deep forest is where the monkey pops live. You can hear them swinging from tree to tree and laughing their chocolate heads off.

Ingredients

8 wooden craft sticks
4 firm, ripe bananas, cut crosswise in half
16 sliced almonds
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1-1/2 tablespoon vegetable oil
16 small round candies (for eyes)
8 Maraschino cherries, sliced into smile shapes
16 sesame seeds

Method

1. Line a cookie sheet with waxed paper.
2. Insert one craft stick into the flat (sliced) end of each banana half. To make the ears, insert an almond slice into each side of the pointy end of the banana half.
3. In a double boiler (or the microwave), melt the chocolate chips. Stir in the vegetable oil.
4. Remove the chocolate from the heat. Place bananas on a rack with waxed paper or a tray underneath. Spoon the chocolate over the bananas. Place the bananas on the cookie sheet.
5. Press the candy eyes, cherry mouths, and sesame seed nostrils into the faces of the monkeys.
6. Freeze at least an hour before serving.

Have a monkey puppet show before eating. Makes 8 monkeys.

From: ***The Secret Life of Food*** by Clare Crespo; photographs by Eric Staudenmaier; Melcher Media Book (Hyperion Books for Children); New York; 2002; Hardcover $19.99.

September 11th, 2001 - 2002

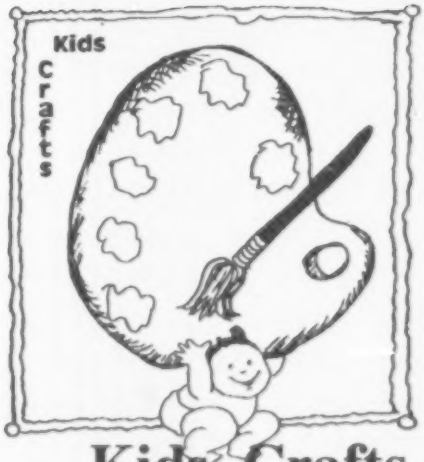
I was 12 years old when I became aware of my helplessness in a dangerous world. It was the Cuban Missile Crisis and I remember being scared that a nuclear war would start before the bus arrived to take me home from school. I know that other kids were scared, some crying, and I still have a memory of the tension in my history teacher, a young man in his 20's. I think of this now, almost 40 years later, as all of us struggle to make sense of what happened in New York City on September 11, 2001.

For very young children, the horror and enormity of what happened will probably fade, leaving just a trace memory of how it affected the grown ups in their lives. For older children, the snapshots of that day will stay in their minds for years, as those days in October stayed in mine. For adults, well, I think many of us were more frightened then we would want to admit. For those affected directly, the tragedy, and the changes that have followed in its wake, are constant shadows on our daily lives.

It is a year later, and like with all bereavement and trauma, this anniversary is a landmark. Maybe we hope that it will signal the end of an awful marathon -- arduous, insane, but finite. But the grief over a loss, whether it is a country losing a sense of security and invincibility, or a preschooler trying to make sense of the loss of a parent, does not end like a race. We have come to this milestone only to find that it is just a marker on a very long road.

The way to help our children is make sure that all of us, the grown-ups in their lives, have the courage to talk to them about difficult feelings, and the patience to listen to their scary thoughts. This anniversary is an opportunity to let our children learn that while the world may not always be a safe place for all people, our families and our communities will continue to work to be safe places for them.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW



Kids Crafts

Crafts to Help Kids Think "*Outside the Box*"

Crafts have the power to transform an ordinary day into an extraordinary day. These rich hands-on experiences will provide children with magical moments of discovery and fun, rousing their natural creativity as they learn the mystery of materials and how they can make their own magic.

When we integrate the arts into children's lives we are fostering their natural voices. Encourage your children to think "outside the box" and build their repertoire of skills as their imaginations run free.

Cultivate the seeds of creativity and watch it blossom.

Down To Earth Prints

You will need:
Leaves, flowers, acorns, pinecones, cattails
Tempera paint in orange, red and yellow or colored stamp pads
Construction paper or other heavy paper

Make authentic earth art and capture some of autumn's treasures by collecting natural materials to use making prints. This will not only engage your child's creativity but also foster an awareness of their environment.

Before printing encourage your children to feel their treasures and describe each texture aloud.

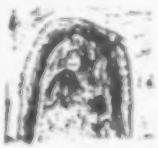
Now, have your children decide how they will make their prints. They can use paint and/or stamp pads. Letting them decide will give them confidence and also support planning skills. Prompt your children to take their "natural printer" and lightly press it into the paint or the ink pad. With even pressure, the children now press the "printer" on the paper. Finally lift the printer off the paper and the print is ready to dry. Encourage them to experiment until they are happy with their design. Making these nature prints will enhance their sense of design and introduce them to new textures.

One Of A Kind Pencil Box

You will need:
A sturdy box (cigar boxes work well)
Scissors
Magazine pictures, scraps of wrapping paper, old cards
Modpodge

For many it's "let's-start-school" and this activity will celebrate this new beginning. Using safety scissors have your children cut out the pictures they will use to decorate their boxes. This fine motor activity will strengthen the muscles in those little hands. Then have your children artfully arrange the pictures on the box, covering it completely and creating a composition of their choice. Overlapping is fine. Finally, using the paintbrush paint over the pictures with the modpodge. This will permanently affix the pictures and provide a nice sheen.

Sensory Awareness Art



You will need:
Assorted packages of colored, flavored drink mixes (e.g. Kool-Aid)
Tablespoon of warm water for each flavor
White paper (watercolor will work best)

This wonderful sensory activity will taste as good as it looks. Kids will get to taste, smell and see the colors enhancing the learning experience. Begin by having your youngsters thoroughly wash their hands. Now, combine each drink mix separately with the warm water to use as finger paints. Use a variety of flavors to make the colors of the rainbow. Encourage the children to experiment, describing the colors, tastes and odors as they go. Let the painting dry for about a day. Then prompt your children to scratch and sniff and discover their paint is a wonderful treat that can be enjoyed in more than one way.

Spaghetti Squash Spirit

You will need:
Spaghetti squash
White paint
Black markers

Start by taking a trip to the grocery store to find a spaghetti squash. Look at the varieties naming them aloud for your young children. Have your children decide if they'd like a scary ghost or friendly ghost. Then have your child paint the squash. Allow it to dry for several hours. Finally have your children add the features according to their whimsical interpretation of a "ghost." This project makes a charming Halloween display and will last for several weeks before spoiling. Your children will beam with pride seeing something they made appreciated and displayed.

Dawn Marie Barbyte

Know Someone Who's Expecting?

How about a gift subscription to *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*? Just send us their name, address and your check for $32 to: P&pN; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215.

We'll send them a gift announcement in your name! This is a gift every new parent will use and appreciate.

Container Gardens for Children

The use of containers to grow plants stretches back thousands of years. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, might be considered to be the ultimate in container gardens. These were a series of gardens built in containers literally hanging over the sides of the walls.

For most of us container, or trough (say: trawf), gardening is the planting of a variety of plants in a windowbox or a large pot. For children we will have to scale down the Babylonian concept to a more realistic scheme and amend the format adding new elements to insure enthusiasm and success.

Young children will enjoy the planting and care of a container garden if the process can be interactive, not only when planting but also at other times. In order to prolong interest, make the container garden a miniature landscape with moveable items.

Let's be specific. Think of a landscape. It can be your own backyard, a house with a pond or lake, grandma's house, a mountain setting, etc. Now create this landscape with miniature plants and small models, making a tiny version with your child as a container garden. Of course, you don't have to be limited by reality. Your child can even create a fantasy environment.

Once you and your child have decided what you want to make, assemble your material and then choose a container.

Hobby shops are a great source for all your miniature figure needs. Model railroad items are almost limitless. Cars, trucks, trains, buildings, bridges are just a few of the many choices one can use in the miniature container garden.

Select, or construct, a container that is at least 12 inches wide by 12 inches in length. The bigger the better as your child will be "playing" in this container.

Clay pots aren't a good choice. They are heavy and let the water evaporate too quickly. Glass can break and injure your child. Regular garden pots with holes in the bottom will let the water escape too easily unless you plug up these holes. Or you can find large plastic pots without drainage holes.

The depth of the container is not too important, but it should be at least 6 inches deep or it will dry out too quickly and won't be able to accommodate a pond or water feature very well.

Now, fill the container. A mixture of sand, peat, and potting soil is ideal. This combination provides for both water retention and drainage. Although it sounds inconsistent the peat helps retain the moisture and nutrients while the sand helps allow excessive moisture to drain.

Now, it's time to add the plants and models. Generally, I like to put my models into the container first, then add the plants to complement the setting. Plastic people and animals are some of the most important items to include as they are the elements for play. A small plastic container set into the ground can become a pond. Small rocks found outside can be brought into the container as boulders.

The variety of plants that can be used is larger than you might think and not very difficult to find. Bonsai trees are perfect accents to these gardens and are generally sold in shopping malls and nurseries. Many nurseries have small hollies, junipers, and miniatures roses (watch for thorns) for sale. When in doubt ask the salesperson for some assistance. Thyme (yes, the herb) is perfect for lawns in your miniature landscape, Thymus serpyllum "Minimus" being the best for this purpose.

The landscape possibilities are almost endless, narrowed only by imagination. The finished container will be an inspiration to make another theme container garden. They are, by the way, excellent for show and tell, although you may have to help your child carry it to preschool or day care.

📖 An excellent source book for more plant and planting ideas is ***Creating and Planting Garden Troughs*** by Joyce Fingerhut and Rex Murfitt published by B B Mackey Books, POBox 475, Wayne, PA, 19087 or email: BBMackey@Prodigy.net

Bill Brown *is a botanist and retired elementary school teacher. He is also a consultant on gardens, garden design, and plants as well as a frequent lecturer on wildflowers. Email him at:* alpinedweb@aol.com.

School Bells Ring and Children Sing:

♪"It's Time to Go to School Again"♪

Back to School Books

Here are some special books to help children as they transition into the school environment.

📖 ***Meet the Barkers: Morgan and Moffat go to School*** by Tomie dePaola; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 2001; Hardcover $13.99. The twins, Morgan and Moffat are going to Kindergarten. Moffie keeps winning gold stars for her correct answers but hasn't made any friends, and Morgan is making lots of friends but hasn't done very well with getting the right answers. By the end of the week, they've balanced out and they both understand that it's important to do well and have friends. And they both love school.

📖 ***Spot Goes to School*** by Eric Hill; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 2001; Boardbook $7.99. Spot is off to school and having a wonderful time. A lovely book for little ones to pull the tabs and flaps and enjoy school along with Spot.

📖 ***Timothy's Ready-For-School Sticker Activity Book*** by Rosemary Wells with Johanna Hurley; Viking; 2000; Activity Book $7.99. Part traditional activity book (solve mazes, find same and different pictures), part reusable sticker book enabling children to create the classroom and dress up the children in the school.

Back to School Means Back to Backpacks

September means school and school means school supplies. One of the most common purchases a parent will make is the ubiquitous backpack. Every kid has a preference on style and color. Backpacks are a popular and very convenient way for kids to transport supplies, books, and lunches. Parents must remember that overpacking backpacks can cause extra stress on children's backs, shoulders, and spines and this can cause injuries.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons conducted a survey in 2001 in which they reported that 58 percent of the responding orthopedists said they had examined patients whose chief complaint was back and shoulder pains which occurred when they had carried heavy backpacks. More than 70 percent of these physicians said that heavy backpacks could cause problems that would require medical treatment. The survey also reported that excessive weight carried by children in backpacks could cause some children to develop bad habits such as poor posture or slouching gaits very early in life.

Muscle fatigue and strain were the most common injuries that can occur when kids load their backpacks with too much stuff. Parents should be aware of the fact that backpacks can cause injury if it weighs 20% of a child's body weight. A 45 lb. child carrying a 10 lb. backpack can be walking into medical problems, especially to the spine and shoulders.

The Medical Society of the State of New York offers the following suggestions for the correct and healthy use of backpacks:

- A child should NEVER carry a backpack that is 20% or greater than their body weight - even less if the child is under the age of 9 years.
- Use only backpacks with wide, padded straps and a padded back.
- Backpacks should be worn using both straps - never hanging from only one shoulder. And the straps should be adjusted so the pack hangs about two inches above the waist. Use a hip strap for heavier backpacks.
- Pack the backpack carefully to evenly distribute the weight and be sure items stay in place.
- Periodically check the pack to remove items that are not needed any longer or will not be needed that day. Don't allow junk to accumulate in a backpack and cause extra weight.
- Think about buying a backpack with wheels if your child needs to carry heavier supplies and books.
- Teach your child proper lifting techniques: bending both knees when picking up a heavy pack, using the legs to lift rather than the back. Teach your child some simple exercises to condition and strengthen back muscles. Your child's pediatrician will be able to recommend safe and effective exercises that are appropriate for your child's age.

Just remember that backpacks are generally a good piece of school equipment but that, just as with anything else, they must be used correctly so that injuries do not occur.

Information for this article was provided by the Medical Society of the State of New York, an organization that is dedicated to children's health and to preventing or reducing the risk of injuries. For more health-related information and referrals to physicians in your community, contact your local county medical society.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Library Resources

Books With A Message

📖 ***Arturo's Baton*** by Syd Hoff; Clarion Books; New York; 1995; Softcover $5.95. A light, semi-humorous story about a famous musical conductor, Arturo, who believes his skill lies in his baton. When he can't find it, he is distraught. Going onstage without his baton, he is still brilliant. The skill lies within him.

📖 ***Baby Knows Best*** by Kathy Henderson; Illustrated by Brita Granstrom; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 2001; Hardcover $15.95. More a book for parents than babies, but all will enjoy the plight of parents who buy baby every wonderful thing they find only to discover baby really loves playing with car keys, eating the same food as everyone else, and snuggling up next to her family.

📖 ***Billy's Big-Boy Bed*** by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes; Whispering Coyote (Charlesbridge Press); Watertown, MA; 2002; Hardcover $15.95. The warm and charming story of Billy and his Big-Boy Bed. It takes him awhile to get comfortable with the idea of giving up his crib but with his parents' patience and wisdom he decides it's a much better place to be. An excellent book to help parents and children make this transition.

📖 ***Peanut's Emergency*** by Cristina Salat; illustrated by Tammie Lyon; Whispering Coyote (Charlesbridge Press); Watertown, MA; 2002; Softcover $6.95. School has ended but Peanut's mother hasn't come to pick her up. Peanut tries to remember what she's supposed to do in emergencies and does her best. An excellent book for families to use in discussions.

📖 ***When Mommy Was Mad*** by Lynne Jonell; illustrated by Petra Mathers; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 2002; Hardcover $13.99. We never learn why, but we do know that Mom woke up in a bad mood. The children become upset and think they must have done something wrong. Then they get angry and prickly like Mommy. Although the message may be that Mommies shouldn't get angry, it also illustrates the impact that parents' moods have on their children (and on each other). And the snuggling up together that cures the situation always is like a good idea.

📖 ***"Wait for me!" Said Maggie McGee*** by Jean Van Leeuwen; illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers; Phyllis Fogelman Books (Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers); New York; 2001; Hardcover $16.99. Maggie is the youngest and smallest in the family, always feeling too little to do anything. Gradually she grows up (of course) and can do more and more. But when she goes to school, she's back to being the youngest again, until she saves the day at the school play. A very sweet and engaging book about being the youngest.

📖 ***What Do You Love?*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Karen Lee Schmidt, Silver Whistle (Harcourt, Inc.); San Diego, CA; 2000; Hardcover $14.00. Mother dog and puppy spend the day together enjoying one another. What do you love? "...hiding places and wild chases." And cuddles and read-alouds.

Now Out In Paperback

📖 ***The Very Noisy Night*** by Diana Hendry; illustrated by Jane Chapman; Puffin Books; New York; 2001; Paperback $5.99. We previously reviewed the hardcover version and loved it. Now it's available in paperback. We still love this story of the Big Mouse, who is constantly awakened by Little Mouse, and is frightened by every sound in their quiet mousehole. Charming illustrations.

📖 ***Max***, written and illustrated by Bob Graham (Candlewick Press, $5.99) One of our favorite books has been released in paperback. Baby Max is the son and grandson of super heroes and heroines but he can't seem to learn to fly. A wonderful book reminding us all that children master their potential in their own good time, and not on our timetable.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award *En Español*

Volume 17 Number 8 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* September - 2002

Ser Padres: Algunas cosas que Verdaderamente Tienes que Saber

Ser padre es un asunto complicado: esto de ser más y menos de lo que se había prometido. Criar niños es tres o cuatro mil millones mas dificilde lo que cualquiera ha descrito. Y quererlos, es mucho más fácil y mágico de lo que uno habría esperado.

Pero incluso los niños y los padres con buenos corazones y buenas intenciones a veces pasan a través de tiempos difíciles. Los padres que son demasiado concienzudos en su afecto y responsabilidad hacia sus niños, que cuidadosamente atienden los detalles de las vidas de sus niños, no siempre obtienen el tipo de resultados que esperaban, y los niños no siempre tienen el éxito que pensaban que les llegaría.

Siempre me he sentido bastante cohibido en llevar a cabo mi rol de padre en público. Como trabajadora social que está criando tres niños, que da conferencias y hace consultorías sobre ser padre y sobre desarrollo infantil, he tratado de alejarme de comunidades y escuelas que me conocen a mi y a mi familia. Ellos hubiesen vistos las pataletas, las peleas, el exceso de comida chatarra, y los pantalones sucios que caracterizan mi vida no laboral. Me hubiesen visto en el automóvil con cara de disgusto, atrasado a una actividad infantil, escuchando a alguien gritar ¡"sácamelo de encima"! desde el asiento de atrás. Quizás entraste al hall central que nosotros afectuosamente llamamos el huracán y fuiste atacado por zapatos, zapatillas y mochilas, y te preguntaste quien estaba a cargo de esta casa.

Crecer es un trabajo dificil, no solo para los niños sino que también para los padres. El trabajo de los padres va mucho mas allá de las cosas básicas que todos conocemos (y esto no necesariamente incluye gastar una fortuna en la muñeca o el juego más "cool" aunque tus niños jurarán que te amarán para siempre). Hacer bien el trabajo de padre, criar niños emocionalmente sanos, no es una simple ecuación de meter buenos ingredientes para que salgan buenos resultados. Hay ciertas habilidades que los padres deben desarrollar para tener más posibilidades de mejores resultados para todos.

Paciencia y Persistencia

Cuando recién empecé a trabajar con familias en crisis me impresionó lo duro que trabajaban muchos padres para manejar la conducta de sus hijos. Pero también me di cuenta que los padres rápidamente se frustraban con la conducta frecuentemente negativa de sus niños.

Observé una y otra vez que la conducta dificil y porfiada del niño persistía, pero la conducta mesurada y paciente de los padres no. Los padres dicen chistosamente que los niños los agotan, pero debido a la frustración y agotamiento los padres frecuentemente se rinden ante la fuerza de un niño de cinco años que constantemente hace demandas. En otras palabras, nos damos por vencidos mucho antes que ellos y esto termina causándonos incluso más problemas.

Mil veces a la semana tenemos que contar hasta cien, respirar profundo, soñar de vacaciones tropicales y bebidas heladas y seguir adelante con tareas para el colegio que están atrasadas, con la timidez desmesurada, mochilas caóticas o niños que objetan todos los alimentos.

La verdad sobre los niños es que ellos no han necesariamente optado por ser flojos, temperamentales, torpes, o tan desorganizados como parecen. Ellos no optaron por súbitamente ponerse fóbicos de la bacinilla o de los truenos. No es su culpa que su hermano mayor acaba de irse al campamento de verano y la casa está tan vacía. Los niños tienen todo tipo de asperezas y sentimientos dificiles y sencillamente no los saben

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comprender mejor que nosotros. Simplemente saben como demostrar estos sentimientos en conductas desafiantes y confusas, y esperan que los adultos que los rodean sabrán exactamente lo que necesitan.

Tenemos que tener paciencia con nuestros niños cuando no se pueden comunicar claramente, y con nosotros cuando no sabemos descifrar su lenguaje. Y tenemos que poder ser persistentes cuando realmente necesitan nuestra ayuda. Y seguir brindándoles pautas y reglas firmes y con amor.

Consistencia

Si quieres que tu niño aprenda a jugar fútbol, lo primero que debes hacer es enseñarle las reglas. Si quieres jugar a la Gallinita Ciega en familia, uno se sienta y aprende las reglas. La misma cosa es verdad para todas las cosas de la vida.

Existen reglas de conducta como, por ejemplo: no puedes invitar a 16 niños de tu kindergarten y no invitas a solo dos; no golpeas a alguien simplemente porque te dan las ganas; no lo quitas el biberón a tu hija, te retractas y se lo devuelves, y después te enojas y se lo quitas, y después te sientes culpable y se lo devuelves.

Si quieres que tus hijos aprendan una regla, o cambien una conducta, tienes que estar preparado a ser predecible y consistente. Mas adelante, cuando tus niños ya sepan como usar los cubiertos de la mesa y cuando pueden comer el postre, puedes dejar a tus mellizos de seis años comer helados y frutas para la cena y justificarlo como una variación de la pirámide nutricional. Una vez que los ritos y rutinas para dormir han sido establecidos quizás decidas dejar a tus niños acostarse un poco mas tarde porque todo el mundo esta gozando de la visita de un pariente favorito. Pero cuando es importante, cuando estas enseñando la importancia de una nueva regla, conducta, o hábito, tienes que ser el malo de la película que echa a perder una fiesta.

Auto Percepción

Como muchos otros padres, yo siempre he pensado que mis niños me arrastraron gritando y pateando a ser adulto. Yo no tuve bebés porque era adulto; mis bebés me hicieron adulto.

Junto con un sentido de responsabilidad y generosidad que parecen ser los requisitos necesarios para el cargo de ser padre, además de convertirse en perito para diagnosticar infecciones en el oído, y aprender a ser unplanificador creativo de cumpleaños, también tuve que convertirme en más inteligente sobre mi mismo.

Hay dos razones especiales para estar concientes de nuestras emociones, necesidades y pensamientos. La primera es que tus niños van a empezar a fastidiarlo antes de que te des cuenta. Quizás te enojes que tu bebé de cuatro meses no duerme toda la noche, con tu niño que siempre corre hacia la escalera, haciéndote tropezar con todos sus juguetes cuando tratas de atraparlo, o con una hija de siete años a la cual parece olvidársele sus tareas veinte minutos después que sale del colegio. Vas a tener que saber como detectar tus propias señales de alerta antes de que te enojes, o incluso peor, que pierdas tu criterio.

Además, estar conciente de tus propias emociones es el mejor seguro que tenemos para poder atender las emociones de nuestros niños. A través de los años, he aprendido que le grito a mis niños cuando estoy asustado, no enojado. Estoy más malhumorado cuando estoy superado y realmente no tengo idea como llevar a tres niños a cuatro distintos lugares, incluso con dos carros y dos padres. Estoy más malhumorado no cuando están más necesitados, sino cuando yo lo estoy. Tener una idea sobre que me hace estallar me ayuda a que mis niños no exploten conmigo.

La razón número dos de por qué la auto percepción es realmente importante es que, tarde o temprano, tus niños se van a ir, y sería bonito tener algún éxito fuera de sus logros y tus canas.

Para los adultos, incluso estos sentimientos autocomplacientes es trabajo. Esto no solo quiere decir que debemos aseguramos que tengamos tiempo para leer un libro, caminar, o dormir una siesta. Puede significar examinar nuestra relación con nuestros propios padres, o nuestras parejas, que sentimos sobre nuestro trabajo y nuestra comunidad. También significa darse el tiempo de ser cuidadosos con nuestras palabras y acciones y de también asumir responsabilidad por ellas. Los padres que han aprendido, o están aprendiendo, las palabras para expresar y manejar sus propios pensamientos y sentimientos tendrán más facilidad de enseñárselas a sus niños.

Sentido de Humor y Perspectiva

Yo se que te han dicho mil veces, pero sigue siendo verdad -que es esencial tener suficiente perspectiva sobre lo que está sucediendo a tu alrededor como para poder reírse (o por lo menos intentado), o creer que esta pataleta, como una tormenta de verano, los aturdirá y después se disipará rápidamente.

Yo si creo que hay una relación entre la risa y la esperanza. Mis niños se asustan cuando ven cuan seriamente respondemos a una situación, y se preocupan cuando me ven enojado por una conducta o travesuras de las cuales ellos ya se han olvidado. Siempre se sienten mejor cuando yo bajo la tensión y la preocupación con una sonrisa o un chiste, de la misma manera que su humor y cariño me reviven cuando estoy agotado.

Cuando me puedo reír sobre mis errores, y a veces sobre los de ellos, aprenden a creer que de alguna manera la próxima vez será mejor. En vez de quedarte pegado en tu rabia hacia ellos y su rabia hacia si mismos, quizás aprendan sobre las posibilidades de cambio (y mejorías) tanto como las consecuencias.

Quizás te has dado cuenta que no he usado la palabra "felicidad" para describir lo que los padres deben tener en mente a medida que intentan aprender ser padres emocionalmente sanos. Yo me he, en más de doscientas o trescientas ocasiones, desdoblado intentado hacer feliz a un niño. Y no estoy hablando de secarles lagrimas de la cara cuando se asustan del estruendo de un globo que explota, o de la larga conversación cuando les dicen que no fueron seleccionados para el equipo. El consuelo y el aliento son grandes dones y siempre se necesitan.

No, me refiero a enfrentar la formidable tarea de pensar que podemos prevenir todas las desilusiones y dolores de la vida. Si creemos que debemos proteger a nuestros niños de los dolores de la vida; de que podemos rápidamente botar al pez muerto al inodoro, reconstruir la casa de muñecas, hablarle al entrenador sobre la manera que usa a nuestro niño en el equipo, y evitar contarles la verdad sobre la abuelita moribunda porque creemos que debemos mantenerlos felices, entonces nunca vamos a ayudar a nuestros hijos construir las fuerzas y habilidades que necesitaran para manejar sus vidas.

Protegerlos demasiado los convierte en fofos emocionalmente -fuera de forma y no aptos para enfrentarse a muchas cosas.

¿Y Cómo lo Estamos Haciendo?

La mayoría de los padres tienen una mezcla de días buenos y días malos y algunos talentos naturales para ser padres. El secreto es tener la paciencia necesaria como para poder encontrarlos. Los padres que encuentran a los bebés adorables pero un poco aburridos, pueden encontrar que un niño de dos años es cualquier cosa meno sterrible. La incansable curiosidad de un niño de cuatro se convierte en el primer aliento del humor de un niño de seis. Justo cuando uno cree que al fin aprendiste y que comprendes a tus niños, parecen pasar a otro nivel, mas allá de tu capacidad de comprenderlos, una vez mas.

Pero si parece que las familias mas sanas parecen que trabajan a mejorarse en su trabajo, corrigiendo y aprendiendo de sus errores, y superando sus fracasos.

Desafortunadamente para nosotros, es el fatigante trabajo de los padres de guiar, formar, y enseñarle a los niños a superar los tiempos difíciles y las emociones confusas. Así es como aprenden y crecen los niños.

Es importante tener en mente que la construcción de la vida emocional de nuestros niños no es un evento estático, escrito en bronce. Se construye, como un mosaico cuidadosamente terminado, pieza por pieza y color por color, a través del tiempo. Debemos tener en cuenta que nuestros niños se ponen más fuertes y sanos debido a distintos factores. Su salud emocional, al igual que su salud física, tiene influencias ambientales y genéticas, e incluso a veces la suerte juega un papel. Todas las familias, padres e hijos, necesitan sentir que están trabajando bastante bien... y recuerde de perdonarse entre si por no ser perfectos.

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Una versión anterior de este artículo fue publicado en *Long Island Parenting* .

Translated By:
TIKAL Translations
(212) 569-6475

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
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Contributors:
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Illustrations
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
Copyright 2002; The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute/NSC&FGC. Printed in the USA.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

PP Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 9 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | October - 2002

When Children Grieve

Five-year-old Liza bursts through her front door into her living room filled with adults who suddenly stop crying and try to smile at her through their tears.

Something is very wrong. She understands that, even if the adults are trying to pretend that everything is okay. She calls out for her Mommy and, as she does, Uncle Danny tells her that Mommy is resting.

Liza feels like they are keeping her away from her Mommy. She's starting to feel scared and wants to be with her Mommy. Mommy makes her feel safe. Aunt Charlotte takes Liza by the hand and leads her to her bedroom, telling her to play quietly for a while. It is hard to play when she's scared. Maybe Mommy is very sick, maybe Liza was a very bad girl and they are trying to decide how to punish her. Liza thinks that they should call her Daddy. He would come home and fix whatever is wrong.

After a while the door to her room opens and Mommy comes in. Her eyes are red and swollen. Mommy's brother, Uncle Danny, stands by the door like a guard watching and listening. Mommy sits on Liza's bed and pats it for her to sit too.

Now, for some reason, she's afraid to sit with Mommy. She feels very scared and, though she does sit, it isn't too close. Mommy starts by saying she has something very sad to tell Liza, but she knows that Liza will try to be brave.

"This morning when Daddy was driving to work he had a very bad accident. A car ran its red light and crashed into Daddy's car. Daddy was hurt very bad and the doctors couldn't fix him. He has gone to live in heaven with God."

Liza starts to cry because she can feel Mommy's sadness and she is frightened. "Why Mommy? I want to see my Daddy." Now Mommy is pulling her close with tears spilling into Liza's hair. "I wonder how long Daddy will be gone and I'll feel this badly," thinks Liza, "why can't God just send Daddy back?"

Liza just had her first encounter with death.

We Can't Really Protect Children From Death

From the first day of most children's lives their parents work to protect them from the sad, bad, or hard parts of life. We feel it is our responsibility to replace favorite toys, or friends who have moved away so that the children won't experience sadness. We replace a child's goldfish when it dies because the idea of explaining death and all that it means, letting children feel the feelings of grief, is unthinkable.

Children usually begin to learn about death only after someone special in their lives dies. Yet that is precisely the most difficult time to grasp these new thoughts and feelings. Their ability to think about what is happening is limited by their emotions. They are too sad, upset and frightened to think.

It's difficult to answer children's questions about death. When they are young they can feel the

questions but lack the words to express themselves. Often these questions are stressful for parents who are also coping with the same deaths affecting their children. No one wants to talk about: What is death; What are these feelings we call grief; Why are we feeling angry when everybody says we are supposed to feel sad; What do we do with anger and sadness; and finally, When will we be normal again.

The words 'death' or 'dead' are like obscenities to be avoided. It feels more comfortable to say something was "lost" as it leaves us with the unspoken hope that we can find it. It is much easier to say that the loved one "passed on" or "passed over" for that might suggest that they are on a trip from which they can return.

We believe that we are giving children a better world by filtering events to make life appear generally good, happy, safe and benign. What we fail to recognize is that we are also denying them the chance to build a repertoire of coping skills, to learn that they are very capable beings who, within the limits of their "age appropriate abilities," are able to handle life as it really happens. We prevent them from learning that the natural order of life includes change and death, and that includes them and those they love.

Death, Grief, and Mourning

➢ Death

Death is the ending of life, as we know it on this earth. It is the stopping of the heart beating, the ceasing of breathing, and the end of sight, hearing, tasting, and feeling. It is also the absence of pain and suffering.

Children understand death according to their developmental level. As they grow, their understanding of death and a specific person's death, is revisited and re-experienced.

Children under five or six years of age don't understand death's finality and the idea that life ends. For them Daddy, Mommy, or Grandma has gone away but may be able to come back. Death is a temporary state, and the very young child wouldn't be very surprised if their loved one walked through the door.

They also show "magical thinking." They feel somewhat able to affect death – able to prevent it, and/or to change the outcome based on their, or others, behavior or thoughts. This, too, can be difficult for parents.

Parents need to talk to their children about the limits of their power to hurt another through their thoughts, or to change death. They need to help children work through this new understanding, which is again a process that is revisited as the children develop.

Parents have to endure a constant barrage of questions that can be frustrating and devastating when the parent is grieving as well. They might be asked why Grandpa isn't coming to visit anymore; why Aunt Sara isn't here with the rest of the family; or, when will Mommy or Daddy be coming home from work.

Starting at about five or six years of age children begin to understand the concept of death but they can still fantasize about where their loved one is.

Even while grieving, parents need to provide consistent, honest answers to the questions posed, as is appropriate to the child's age. When faced with a child's inability to understand what has happened, they need to provide reassurance, and they need to provide answers gently and repeatedly until the child is satisfied.

Parents need to allow their children to ask questions, to consider possibilities, to fantasize, and to confront reality.

Parents need to be truthful. They need to listen and talk to their children through the hours and the days, the weeks and the months, and ultimately through the years following the death.

➢ Grief

Grief is the emotions we experience, the feelings we have inside ourselves that are the result of the death or the loss of someone we love.

All grief doesn't feel the same, for us or for our children. There are a number of things that can change the intensity of our grief and its quality. Grief is more intense depending on our emotional closeness to the person who died. A child may feel more grief for a pet than for a grandparent who rarely visited.

The responses of most young children to a death are anger, anxiety, sadness, crying, and even guilt. They may express these feelings in a variety of ways including acting out behavior and aggression, a return to thumb-sucking, or toileting problems.

Because they don't understand the finality of death our

Yes, Even Babies Grieve

Many adults think that because very young children are not completely aware of what is going on around them, they are not impacted by death. We must dispel this myth. I say it simply: Any child old enough to love is old enough to mourn.

True, infants and toddlers are not developmentally mature enough to fully understand the concept of death. In fact, many children do not truly understand the inevitability and permanence of death until adolescence.

But understanding death and being affected by it are two very different things. When a primary caregiver dies, even tiny babies notice and react to the loss. They might not know exactly what happened and why, but they do know that someone important is now missing from their small worlds.

Yes, even babies grieve. And when someone they love dies, children of all ages need our time and attention if they are to heal and grow to be emotionally healthy adults.

➢ Source: *Helping Infants and Toddlers When Someone They Love Dies* by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Center for Loss and Life Transition; 970 226-6050; www.centerforloss.com/

young children may feel guilty, believing that their thoughts in a time of distress caused the death to happen. Intense crying may signal not only sadness, but the hope that their loved one will come back to comfort them. When their loved one doesn't return, repeated acts of aggression may express their anger and frustration.

➢ **Mourning**

Mourning is the outward expression of our internal feelings of grief. Young children are said to be capable of mourning when they are able to understand the finality of death.

They need to understand the concept that people continue to exist even when they are no longer in sight. They must have an understanding of Grandma, or Uncle Frank as a person for mourning to occur. Most children develop these capacities by three or four years of age.

Although mourning is sad and caused by grief, it can also be constructive. To go through the process of mourning, according to grief specialist J. William Worden people need to do the following: accept the reality of the loss; experience the pain of the loss; adjust to the world without the person in it; relocate the person within one's life and find ways to memorialize the person.

The young preschool child is not usually developmentally able to go through this process but they can experience the pain of absence and they can adjust to the world without the person in it. A child capable of loving is capable of grieving and therefore capable of mourning.

Older children can talk about their loved ones and their emotions. They can participate in activities done in memory of those who have died. With each remembrance they can bring the individual back into their world. The dead remain alive and with them through memories.

Grief Boxes

In order to understand a child's reaction it may help to conceptualize people as having "boxes" that hold grief feelings. Each "box" fills with a variety of feelings when someone they love dies.

Young children can tolerate the pain of grief only in small amounts. They have the ability to close the "grief box" and run off to play, ignoring its presence. It is just this ability that leads many adults to feel that children do not grieve.

Young children's "grief boxes" fill up as they watch their parent cry, as they sit at the dinner table and look at the empty chair, or as they observe other children's visits with loving friends, aunts and uncles, and grandparents.

If the feelings inside the box grow either in intensity or fullness the child will sometimes behave in a way that confuses them and those around them. For example: Liza was at the preschool watching the father of one of her classmates talk about his job in the Police Department. She had played over at the girl's house once and her parents had been very nice. Yet, as she sat listening, she felt herself getting full of something uncomfortable. She felt as though she needed to run all the way home, but, of course, she couldn't do that.

As the day wore on Liza was feeling more uncomfortable and confused. She just wanted to hit something or someone. At that point the police officer's daughter took the last swing in the playground. Before Liza could think she ran over and pushed the girl hard making her fall off the swing. The girl went off crying to tell the teacher and Liza started to swing high up in the sky. It puzzled Liza that she had felt so angry with the girl. Liza really liked her. Then she started to cry too, as she knew Mommy, and the teacher, and the girl's father, would be mad at her.

Through the process of mourning the child acknowledges and expresses inner feelings, periodically opening the "box." Sometimes this is intentional, such as when speaking to a parent or a counselor – through words or play – where their thoughts and emotions, the contents of the box, are explored.

If the process of mourning is handled appropriately, children will allow themselves to feel the grief, identify it, and express it whether in words, drawings, puppetry or an activity such as sports or dance.

As they work with what is inside the box, through time, the contents slowly change. In some cases certain feelings are let go, such as anger or guilt. A child may come to understand that Mommy really can't come back, or that angry thoughts didn't make Daddy die. In other cases, feelings such as sadness and anxiety are reworked to become less intense or less full.

The grief work helps children keep their emotions under some level of control. They begin to learn to manage and contain their feelings, such as when they are with friends or at daycare. They don't get over the death, but the feelings become less painful with time and work. They learn how to live without the person in their world.

Parenting and Grief

Parents need to accept that it is okay and

Hugger Bear

It also might help to have a certain stuffed bear that becomes the designated "hugger" bear. Every time any member of the family feels the need for a hug, they can find the bear. Hugging the bear will feel good, but it is also a signal to the rest of the family that the person is in need of some warm presence at this time. It is nice when the warmth comes without having to ask.

➢ Source: *Please Hear of My Lost Love...* by Doug Manning, a free booklet dedicated to the families of the September 11,2001 tragedy, published by In-Sight Books, Inc. 1-800-658-9262; www.insightbooks.com/, 2001.

Feed the Child's Spirit

Perhaps more important than feeding the grieving child's body is feeding his spirit. After all, grief is largely a spiritual journey.

Teach the child about your spiritual beliefs and if appropriate, help him learn about the beliefs of other faiths as well.

Invite the child to teach you about his spiritual beliefs.

Some non-religious way of feeding the grieving child's spirit include taking a walk in the woods, silently observing the night sky, or rowing a boat across a placid lake.

➢ Source: *Healing the Grieving Child's Heart: 100 practical ideas for families, friends & caregivers* by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., Companion Press, Center for Loss and Life Transition; 2000; (970) 226-6050; www.centerforloss.com/

even necessary for their children to feel sad or angry and grieve. That is probably the hardest part.

Parents can help their children by starting to build a *vocabulary of feelings*. It is helpful for children to learn to think about their emotions. Being able to identify what a child feels gives them a sense of control. Is it anger, sadness, anxiety, guilt?

It isn't always clear what drives children's behavior, but it is important to try to separate the grief from the other emotions of life. For example, Liza may feel guilty and one may assume that the feeling is related to her Daddy's death. However if you were to explore that with her, you might find that she feels guilty because she was mean to her friend. The guilt is a result of her missing her Daddy and acting in an aggressive way toward the girl who has a Daddy. It isn't guilt resulting from her feeling she was responsible for her Daddy's death.

This understanding helps the parent determine how to work with their child. Too often parents excuse behavior in the mistaken perception that the child was responding to the pain of grief.

Parents also need to be the reassuring force in a child's world. They have the power to make a child feel safe through their presence, their physical care of them, their words of comfort and love, and by providing a stable and structured daily life. Your children look to you to tell them that "it is going to be ok," and that "we are safe."

Parents need to provide children with a way to communicate their feelings. Depending on the child's abilities and available resources this may be done through talking with the parent or another trusted adult who can hear their questions, support their curiosity, and provide answers.

One way to do this is through books about death and dying. These books can also speak for adults who are themselves uncomfortable with death. There are books that explain what death is, those that talk about the various feelings of grief, and those that address how one copes with grief. Some books just tell the story of another child who has experienced a death and how that youngster lived through it.

You can read these books with your youngsters and allow them to bring up their feelings and fears. You can ask how they feel about something in the book as a way to gently start a discussion. You can also create a homemade book with your youngster. (See *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*, September, 2001 – "Writing a Life Book with Our Children: A tool to help families manage life passages".)

Children can also use drawing: they can express their feelings through a journal of pictures. Parents then have the opportunity to talk about these emotions and assure their youngsters that grief, although painful, is something from which they can grow.

Craft activities can also express what children can't say. Children can be given clay with the suggestion that they "create their anger." With crayons and paper the child can be ask to "draw your family," or "draw what scares you."

Finally, just going outside and playing can be therapeutic. It can provide children with an acceptable physical outlet to express feelings for which they don't have words or can't express through words. When you're frustrated or upset you go out for a run because you feel better when you come back home. You work out emotions physically through running or working out, or any physical activity, and so do children.

Grief groups provide children five years and up with a safe place to talk to other children who are also experiencing grief, and where they won't feel different. Preschool children can often benefit when their surviving parent attends group. The better the parent copes, the better the children will do.

Liza's Mom learned to identify her own feelings, that it was normal for her to feel the way she did, and how to handle those feelings. She learned that she and Liza were going to feel better; and that, slowly, they would both begin to smile and to laugh again. She was able to communicate these things to Liza. Over time with support and work, Liza's Mom's "grief box" became less full, less intense and less overwhelming. She was able to help Liza remember her Daddy; his favorite ice cream flavor, the music he liked best, the color of his eyes, all helping Liza build memories of him while helping her Mom work through the mourning process. She built a network of support that included the other widows and widowers in her group and that network supported Liza as well. Liza and her Mommy would always miss Daddy. They knew he loved them and they would always love him.

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Pregnancy Loss

Loss, and the grief that accompanies it, is a universal human experience, and can touch every aspect of one's life. Miscarriage, and even abortion results in long-term changes in one's life – relationships,thoughts, and feelings.

⇒ Why is the experience so intense and overwhelming?

It is a crisis, an unexpected event that overwhelms our usual coping strategies. It requires more resources, energy, and strength than we ordinarily use to manage typical daily life. It catches us off guard, and often leads to powerful feelings of deprivation, trauma, stigma, and isolation. Suddenly it seems as though everything around us accentuates and reminds us of this loss.

⇒ Why does this hurt so much, we never even knew this baby?

Each person experiences a pregnancy loss in a unique way. It nearly always involves a feeling of sadness and profound disappointment. It touches on our hopes and dreams, the intangible expectations for the future; the source of imagined joy and contentment; our fantasy of the perfect baby and the perfect life. It may effect our religious, spiritual values and open new concerns about our personal philosophy and even the meaning of life.

⇒ What helps?

At first nothing may soothe the pain of the loss, and the feeling that this overwhelming pain may never go away. The disappointment is so profound and seems to taint many aspects of life. Compassion and support are crucial, though that alone will not heal the wounds. Sharing with others these new thoughts and feelings helps us feel less alone and isolated. Knowing that we are cared about and that our suffering matters is comforting. Finding a way to make some meaning out of something that seems so unfair and senseless is important, and often eventually leads to reaching outside of ourselves and using the painful experience to help others in some way.

⇒ What can I do to feel better?

Understanding what happened, why, and how it might be prevented in the future is important. Grieving, or experiencing the feelings that accompany loss, is a process. It most often happens in a kind of cyclical way not incrementally the way we might expect. You can expect to feel better one day, and worse the next. Feelings of grief and sorrow seem to come in like a wave, unexpected and powerful. **Remind yourself that this process is normal, it will subside, and is survivable.**

⇒ Where can I turn for extra help?

This loss affects body mind and spirit. Take care of yourself physically, and pay attention to the stress related to hormonal and physical changes. Adequate nutrition and fluid intake seems obvious, but is easy to forget. Exercise may help you feel better both emotionally and physically, and will get you back into shape.

Support and self-help groups offer a needed outlet as well as sources of additional information. Don't hesitate to enlist the short-term assistance of a mental health professional or support group.

⇒ What Else?

Pay attention to the positive changes within and around you, and be assured that this acute pain will subside, and as impossible as it now seems, you will once again feel joy, hope, and vitality.

➢ *Adapted with permission from "Pregnancy Loss: Finding the strength to move forward" written by Holly Shaw, RN, Ph.D. Copyright The Schnurmacher Family Bereavement and Trauma Center at "The Cottage;" Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215.*

Hints for Parents When Your Children Grieve

➢ *Begin with your children's questions and concerns. Let their questions be your guide.*

➢ *Be aware of how strong your own feelings are and how they will appear to, and affect your child.*

➢ *Listen to how your child understands the situation -- ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. Young children can't always make sense of the information we give them.*

➢ *Don't use euphemisms when talking to your child about death. Offering unclear images will simply confuse him and hinder his ultimate understanding of death and his ability to develop coping skills. Be consistent, honest, and offer answers appropriate to his age while being clear and specific.*

➢ *Parents must accept their children's grief and not try to "make it all better" by denying their child's pain. Give a child permission to grieve, feel sad, or be angry.*

➢ *Be ready, willing, and able to listen. Your child will tell you what she is feeling in her own time. Be there for her when she is ready.*

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW

Dear Reader ...

It was almost eight years ago that my husband walked out of the house, and died of a heart attack. Our son was barely a teenager. It was a very difficult time for both of us, and my son and I struggled to come to terms with our losses and to rebuild our lives.

I wasn't spectacularly helpful during the early months, but with the love and support of others, both my son and I survived. I can't speak for my almost-adult son, but I can say that life is good. That the sun rises each morning and I (usually) relish the thought of a new day, full of promise and possibilities.

There are things people can do to help a grieving child, even in the midst of their own grief. We dedicate this month's issue to the subject of grief and loss. Kathi Morse, ACSW and Certified Trauma Specialist, has written a warm and gentle article, but one that will also help guide adults through the process of helping young children. We also have a smaller piece on loss through miscarriage. It is a wrenching experience, and one often made worse because others fail to understand that it too is a loss.

Our Library Resources provides a selection of truly helpful books to sit and read with and to your youngster, as well as some books to help you, the adult, cope with grief.

Grief is not a road anyone should have to walk alone. Never feel that you can't, or shouldn't, reach out to others. Always know that if you seek assistance, you can find it – whether through friends, books, grief groups, or a more spiritual quest.

I wish you softer days and gentle nights.

Neala Schwartzberg

Columbus Day

On August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus set out to find the so-called Spice Islands, also known as the Moluccas or East Indies. This famous voyage was financed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, who hoped that he would bring back spices - especially pepper used in the days before refrigeration to preserve meats.

Columbus arrived two months later in the Bahamas but mistakenly thought he had reached the East Indies. Although he made three other voyages in the next nine years, he eventually returned to Spain defeated. He died in 1506, poverty-stricken and with his achievements largely forgotten.

Today his birthday is celebrated throughout the world on the second Monday in October, with parades, feasts, and special reenactments of his landing in the New World.

• Information for this piece from *Holiday Symbols, 2nd Edition*; by Sue Ellen Thompson; Omnigraphics, Detroit, Mi.; 2000; Hardcover.

October is Hispanic Heritage Month

The Smithsonian in Washington, DC has a wonderful set of events and exhibits planned for Hispanic Heritage Month. Check out their calendar of events by going to www.hispanic.com/

The site offers information, services, and technology access to the global Hispanic community.

On the Bookshelf...

We are now alive in a time that will forever be known as "Post 9/11." The events of the past year will be etched in our consciousness for the rest of our lives. Some of our children will carry frightful images with them throughout their lives - hopefully the very youngest may be spared this burden.

When we think of all that we have lived through this year, it seems fitting that those among us who have worked on the front lines helping victims should come forward to make a permanent historical record of these challenging times. And that is exactly what is happening. One such journal comes in the form of personal memories of those who responded to the call for help that fateful day. A special memorial issue of "Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping," is a dramatic body of narratives collected from human services workers. These narratives from persons who experienced and responded to the victims of 9/11 offer stories of great courage, unfathomable human tragedy, and professional empathy coupled with skill and expertise. When reading these pieces one can only feel a sense of thankfulness that professionals of this caliber were there at the time they were needed most. If you can bear it - read these accounts - if you can bear it. It will not be easy. So often we live through events that, in retrospect, are thought of as "history" but we never pay attention to them in the actual moment. This time we are forced to pay attention. Perhaps that is as it should be. Perhaps it is time for everyone to be "on the front lines" - paying attention - even as we weep.

📖 9/11 Memorial Issue of "*Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*"; edited by Alex Gitterman and Andrew Malekoff, members of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups; available September 2002; to order contact: Jillian Jimenez, Editor, *Reflections*; 1250 Bellflower Blvd.; Long Beach, Ca. 90840; Individual Copies: $10; Individual Subscriptions: $40 per year; Libraries and Institutions: $65 per year; published quarterly.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Autumn & Apples

Another change of season. Autumn is here. Smell the falling leaves, enjoy the Autumn flowers, hear the geese flying south, honking their migration.

It's a beautiful time of year, filled with the abundance of the harvest. It's time to celebrate by picking pumpkins and helping to make scarecrows to adorn the front yard or front door.

There's also a fresh crop of apples. Let mom or dad make them into apple jack o'lanterns. Or as a delicious shell-you-can-eat for chicken salad. Of course, we can all toast this glorious season with a tall glass of apple cider. And perhaps munch some popcorn, too.

APPLES O' LANTERN

If you can't find pumpkins (or even if you can) here's a variation on the jack o'lantern idea. Choose about four large apples such as Delicious (red or golden) or Roman.

1. Adult: Cut the top stem part off, about 1/4 of an inch. You can save this for a cap or discard.
2. Child: Scoop the flesh out with a serrated spoon being careful not to damage the shell of the apple, or cut your fingers. Note: It is a good idea for adults to show children how to do the first apple.
3. Adult and child: Decide on the design or face to be cut into the apple.

4. Adult: Carve the apple with desired designs.
5. Child: Squeeze some lemon juice and rub it inside of the apple to avoid darkening.
6. Adult: If you wish, you can carefully insert a very small candle inside, and light it. It will be pretty set on a table as a decoration for a Halloween party. Either with or without the candle, enjoy your Apple O'Lantern.

APPLE STUFFED WITH CHICKEN SALAD

4 apples, rinsed
lemon juice, freshly squeezed
2 cups cooked chicken, diced
1/2 cup mayonnaise, light or regular
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
1/4 cup celery, finely chopped
1 shallot, finely chopped
1 red pepper, seeded, and finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper

1. Adult: Cut off the apple stem part tops to about 1/4 inch, and save them for later to cover the apple cups. Cut the lemons into half, set aside. Dice the chicken, and set aside. Chop the pecans, celery, pepper, and shallot and set aside.
2. Child: Squeeze the lemons, set aside. Scoop the insides of the apples with a serrated spoon, but be careful not to damage the shell or cut your fingers, again adults should demonstrate how to do the first apple.

3. Child: Rub the lemon juice inside of the apple shells, and set them aside.
4. Child and Adult: Measure the remaining ingredients into a medium size bowl. Mix well and taste for seasonings.
5. Child: Fill the apples with the chicken mixture using a spoon. Cover with the apple top, and place on a tray, salad is ready to be served, or cover with a plastic wrap, and refrigerate for about 1 hour. Serve cold with apple cider.

A happy and delicious Halloween and a smiling "Boo!" to all of you preschoolers in the kitchen!

Sandra Allen

After Trick-or-Treating

It's Halloween time once more. Kids are ready to go - parents have helped them to create safe costumes and taught them to be careful when carving pumpkins. Families have spent time being sure that their own homes are safe for visiting trick-or-treaters and now the big night has arrived. Parents have accompanied their children making house calls at places where the occupants are known.

Everything has gone well but there is one final thing that parents must do - post-Halloween. Children have returned home with bags filled with goodies but before they can enjoy their "loot" parents must remember:

- An adult must examine every treat before a child eats it.
- Look for any sign of tampering - if a wrapper is torn or loose, throw the treat away.
- Don't let little ones have treats that might pose a choking hazard. Watch out for gumballs, peanuts, small hard candies, or small toys.

This information is provided by the Medical Society of the State of New York. For referrals or more information on health-related issues contact your local community medical society.

Talk to Us...

We want to hear from you. If you have any comments, feedback, suggestions, or ideas, please contact us. Call us toll free at: 1-800-595-9365 or write to: The Editor; *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Road; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215. We're waiting to hear from you... .

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Children Experiencing or Facing Possible Loss

📖 ***I Have an Olive Tree*** by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Karen Barbour; Joanna Cotler Books (HarperCollins Publishers); New York; 1999; Hardcover $14.95. When her grandfather dies a young girl is asked to hang a necklace on the family olive tree in memory of her grandparents. The girl and her mother make the trip to Greece and touch a piece of her family's heritage.

📖 ***I Know Someone Who Died*** by Connie Manning; illustrated by Deb Lund; In-Sight Books; Oklahoma City, OK (800-658-9262); coloring/activity. Sit down with your youngster and read, color, talk about death, grieving, and the process of mourning. This is one of the best books we've come across to help you and your child work through the death of a loved one.

📖 ***Nana Upstairs & Nana Downstairs*** by Tomie dePaola; Puffin Books (Penguin Putnam); New York; 2000; Softcover $5.99. The story of a young boy's grandmother (Nana Downstairs) and great-grandmother (Nana Upstairs). Over time Nana Upstairs dies and the little boy mourns. Years later Nana Downstairs had become Nana Upstairs, and also dies. As the young man looks out the window, a falling star reminds him that they are both Nana Upstairs, and the star is a loving kiss.

📖 ***Promises*** by Elizabeth Winthrop; illustrated by Betsy Lewin; Clarion Books; New York; 2000; Hardcover $16. Sarah's mother is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer. When the therapy is over Sarah wants her mother to promise that she won't get sick anymore. Her mother can't promise that but she can promise to stop on the way home for ice cream.

📖 ***Rudi's Pond*** by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Ronald Himler; Clarion Books; New York; 1999; Hardcover $15.00. Told from the point of view of a young girl whose dear friend Rudi has died. The children in the school decide to create a memorial: a pond beside an oak tree.

📖 ***Sammy's Mommy Has Cancer*** by Sherry Kohlenberg; illustrated by Lauri Crow; Magination Press (American Psychological Association); Washington DC; 1993; Softcover $8.95. This book has a happy ending. Written by a cancer survivor to explain her struggle to very young children. The book has simple language.

📖 ***That Summer*** by Tony Johnston; illustrated by Barry Moser; Harcourt Children's Books; San Diego, Ca.; 2002; Hardcover $16.00. The summer started like any other but one day Joey falls sick. Joey's grandmother begins a quilt and Joey helps with pieces representing everything he loves. When he dies, they finish the quilt to say good-bye. It's an almost lyrical and sometimes painfully evocative story.

📖 ***Where is Grandpa?*** by T. A. Barron; illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet; Puffin Books (Penguin Putnam); New York; 2000; Softcover $6.99. Grandfather just died and the family gathers to share their memories. But the young boy wants to know where Grandpa is now. His father explains that he's in heaven, and this is any place where people who love each other are together. This is also a beautifully and tenderly illustrated story.

≫ Free Resource

📖 ***Please Hear of My Lost Love...*** by Doug Manning This wonderful booklet is dedicated to the families of the September 11, 2001 tragedy. It let's readers know that someone is there while they struggle forward. Copies are available free of charge to families affected by the events of September 11th. Call In-Sight Books, Inc. (see below).

≫ Miscarriage

📖 ***All Seasons Pass: grieving a miscarriage*** by Martha Manning; Sorin Books; Notre Dame, In.; 2000; Softcover $9.95. Martha Manning is both a psychologist and a woman who has had two miscarriages. She offers her own insights and learning.

≫ Helping Children

📖 ***Healing the Grieving Child's Heart: 100 practical ideas for families, friends & caregivers*** by Alan D. Wolfelt; Companion Press (see below), 2000. Good solid advice and counsel.

📖 ***Lean On Me Gently: Helping the grieving child*** by Doug Manning; In-Sight Books, Inc.(see below); 1998; Softcover. A warm book for families who have experienced a loss. It gives readers the feeling that someone is talking them through the process of healing, describing how children grieve and how adults can help them.

➤ Both Companion Press and In-Sight Books offer a complete catalogue. If you would like to request further information: Companion Press: The Center for Loss and Life Transition; 3735 Broken Bow Road; Fort Collins, CO 80526; phone: 970 226-6050; fax: 800-922-6051; http://www.centerforloss.com
In-Sight Books, Inc.; P O Box 42467; Oklahoma City, OK 73123; 405-810-9501; 800-658-9262; www.insightbooks.com

CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
10 Issues per Year
Send payment payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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www.northshorechildguidance.org

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
Two Years – US$57
Three Years – US$80
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$52
Two Years – US$87
Three Years – US$111
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award *En Español*

Volume 17, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* October - 2002

Cuando los Niños Están de Duelo

*L*iza, de cinco años, irrumpe a través de la puerta de la sala que está llena de adultos que súbitamente dejan de llorar y tratan de sonreírle a través de las lagrimas.

Algo está muy mal. Ella comprende eso, a pesar de que los adultos están fingiendo que todo está bien. Llama a su mami y cuando lo hace, el tío Daniel le dice que su mamá está descansando.

Liza siente que la están tratando de mantener alejada de su mami. Está comenzando a sentir miedo y quiere estar con su mamá. La mami la hace sentirse segura. La tía Carlota la toma de la mano y la lleva a su dormitorio, diciéndole que juegue silenciosamente por un rato. Es difícil jugar cuando se tiene miedo. Quizás la mamá está muy enferma, quizás Liza se portó mal y ellos están decidiendo como castigarla. Liza cree que ellos debieran llamar a su papá. El vendría a casa y solucionaría cualquier problema.

Pasan algunos instantes y la puerta de su cuarto se abre y entra su mamá. Sus ojos están rojos e hinchados. El hermano de mamá, el tío Daniel, se para en la puerta como un guardia, escuchando y mirando. La mamá se sienta en la cama de Liza y le indica que también se siente.

Ahora, por alguna razón, tiene miedo de sentarse con la mami. Se siente muy asustada y, a pesar que se sienta, no se pone muy cerca. La mamá empieza diciéndole que ella tiene algo muy triste que contarle, pero ella sabe que Liza va a tratar de ser valiente.

"Esta mañana cuando el papá estaba yendo al trabajo en auto, tuvo un accidente muy grave. Un carro pasó con luz roja y chocó contra el carro de papá. El papá fue herido de gravedad y los médicos no pudieron hacer nada. Se ha ido a vivir al cielo con Dios".

Liza empieza a llorar porque puede sentir la pena de mamá y tiene miedo. ¿"Por qué mamá? Quiero ver a mi papi". Ahora la mami está abrazándola con lagrimas que se derraman sobre el pelo de Liza. ¿"Me pregunto cuanto tiempo el papá estará lejos y me sentiré tan mal"?, piensa Liza, ¿"Por qué Dios no lo puede simplemente devolver"? Liza acaba de tener su primer encuentro con la muerte.

No Podemos Proteger a los Niños de la Muerte

Desde el primer día de la vida de la mayoría de los niños sus padres tratan de protegerlos de lo triste, de lo malo, o de las partes difíciles de la vida. Creemos que es nuestra responsabilidad reemplazar los juguetes favoritos, o a los amigos que se han mudado lejos, para que los niños no sientan pena. Remplazamos el pez de los niños cuando este muere porque la idea de explicarles la muerte y todo lo que ella implica, y dejarlos sufrir el sentimiento de duelo, es impensable. Los niños normalmente empiezan a aprender sobre la muerte solo después que alguien especial en sus vidas muere. Sin embargo, ese es precisamente el momento mas difícil de comprender estos sentimientos y pensamientos nuevos. Su habilidad de pensar sobre lo que está sucediendo está limitada por sus emociones. Están demasiado tristes, desconsolados atemorizados para poder pensar.

Es muy difícil contestar las preguntas de los niños sobre la muerte. Cuando los niños son chicos pueden sentir las preguntas pero les faltan las palabras para poder expresarse. Frecuentemente estas preguntas son estresantes para los padres que también están tratando de superar las mismas muertes que afectan a sus niños. Nadie quiere hablar sobre: ¿Qué es la muerte?; ¿Qué son estos sentimientos que llamamos duelo?; ¿Por qué sentimos rabia cuando todos dicen que debemos sentimos tristes?; ¿Qué podemos hacer con la rabia y la tristeza?; Y, finalmente, ¿cuando nos vamos a sentir normales otra vez?

Las palabras "la muerte" y "muerto" son como obscenidades que debemos evitar. Es mucho más cómodo decir que algo se "perdió" ya que nos deja con la esperanza de que lo podamos encontrar. Es mucho más fácil decir que nuestro ser querido se ha "extinguido" o se "ha ido", ya que esto sugiere que están en un viaje del cual pueden volver. Creemos que les estamos dando un mundo mejor al filtrarles cosas para que la vida les parezca generalmente buena, feliz, segura y benigna. Lo que no reconocemos es que también les estamos negando la oportunidad de poder tener un repertorio de habilidades para enfrentar las cosas, de aprender de que son seres muy capaces que, dentro de los límites de sus "habilidades apropiadas a su edad" son capaces de enfrentar a la vida como realmente es. Les quitamos

la posibilidad de aprender que el orden natural de la vida incluye el cambio y la muerte, y que eso los incluye a ellos y a las personas que quieren.

Muerte, Dolor y Duelo
Muerte
La muerte es el fin de la vida que conocemos en esta tierra. Es el corazón que para de latir, es dejar de respirar, y el fin de ver, oír, saborear, y sentir. También es la ausencia del dolor y del sufrimiento. Los niños comprenden la muerte de acuerdo a su nivel de desarrollo. A medida que crecen y se desarrollan, su comprensión de la muerte y del fallecimiento de una persona específica, es recobrada y reexperimentada.

Los niños de menos de cinco o seis años no comprenden la finalidad de la muerte y la idea de que la vida se termina. Para ellos la mami, el papi y la abuelita simplemente se han ido pero quizás puedan volver. La muerte es un estado temporario, y los niños muy chicos no se sorprenderían mucho si sus difuntos entraran por la puerta.

También demuestran "pensamiento mágico". Sienten que son capaces de afectar un poco la muerte - capaces de evitarla, y/o cambiar el desenlace basado en sus conductas, o de las de otros, y pensamientos. Esto también puede ser difícil para los padres.

Los padres tienen que hablarles a sus hijos sobre los límites de sus poderes como seres humanos para que no hieran a otros a través de sus pensamientos, o de cambiar la muerte. Tienen que poder ayudarle a los niños entender esta nueva comprensión, que es un proceso que es recobrado a medida que los niños se desarrollan.

Los padres tienen que tolerar una constante andanada de preguntas que pueden ser frustrantes y devastadoras cuando el padre también está sufriendo. Puede que se les pregunte por qué el abuelito ya no viene de visita. O por qué la tía Sarita no está aquí con el resto de la familia. O cuando la mami o el papi llegarán a la casa después del trabajo.

Alrededor de los cinco a seis años los niños empiezan a comprender el concepto de la muerte pero aun pueden tener fantasías sobre donde está su ser querido.

Pero, aun cuando están de duelo, los padres deben dar respuestas honestas y consistentes a las preguntas planteadas, que sean apropiadas a la edad del niño. Cuando se enfrentan a la inhabilidad del niño de comprender lo que ha sucedido, deben dar confianza, y deben dar respuestas con cariño y continuamente hasta que el niño esté satisfecho.

Los padres deben permitirle a sus niños a hacer preguntas, a considerar las posibilidades, a tener sus fantasías y, en ultima instancia, enfrentar la realidad.

Los padres deber decir la verdad. Tienen que escuchar y conversar con sus niños durante las horas y los días, las semanas y los meses, y finalmente durante los años después del fallecimiento.

Dolor
El dolor es la emoción que experimentamos, los sentimientos que tenemos dentro de nosotros que son el resultado de la muerte o de la perdida de alguien que queremos. El dolor no se siente de la misma manera, para nosotros o para nuestros niños. Hay un sinnúmero de cosas que pueden cambiar la intensidad de nuestro dolor y su calidad. La pena es más intensa dependiendo de nuestra cercanía a la persona que falleció. Un niño puede sentir más pena por una mascota que por un abuelito que raras veces visitaba.

Las respuestas de la mayoría de los niños chicos a la muerte son la rabia y conductas de expresiones reprimidas, angustia, pena, llanto y culpa. Quizás expresen estos sentimientos de distintas maneras incluyendo explicitando conductas, agresión, o volver a chuparse el dedo o problemas con su hábitos en el baño.

Por que no entienden que la muerte es el fin, nuestros niños chicos pueden sentirse culpables, creyendo que sus pensamientos en un momento de angustia fue la causa de la muerte. Llantos intensos pueden significar no solo pena, sino la esperanza de que sus seres queridos volverán a consolarlos. Cuando el ser querido no vuelve, actos de agresión repetidos pueden expresar rabia y frustración.

Duelo
El duelo es la expresión externa de nuestros sentimientos internos de dolor. Se dice que los niños pequeños son capaces de duelo cuando están preparados a comprender que la muerte es el fin. Tienen que haber logrado entender el concepto que las personas continúan existiendo aun cuando ya no se los puede ver. Deben tener la comprensión que la abuelita o el tío Francisco son una persona para que pueda haber duelo. La mayoría de los niños desarrollan esta capacidad a los tres o cuatro años. Aunque el duelo es triste y causado por dolor, también puede ser constructivo. Pasar a través del proceso de duelo, de acuerdo al especialista de dolor J. William Worden las personas tienen que hacer las siguientes cosas: aceptar la realidad de la perdida; experimentar el dolor de la perdida; adaptarse al mundo sin que la persona este en el; reposicionar a la persona dentro de su vida y encontrar maneras de recordar a la persona.

El niño chico preescolar generalmente no puede pasar a través de este proceso debido a razones de desarrollo pero pueden experimentar el dolor de la ausencia y se pueden adaptar al mundo sin que la persona esté en el, aunque no estarían sorprendidos si esa persona fuera a volver. Un niño que es capaz de querer es capaz de dolor y por lo tanto es capaz de duelo.

Los niños de más edad pueden hablar de sus seres queridos y de sus emociones. Pueden participar en actividades en memoria de los que han fallecido. Con cada conmemoración pueden traer a la persona a su mundo actual y futuro. Los difuntos siguen vivos con ellos a través de sus recuerdos.

Cajas de Dolor
Para poder comprender la reacción de un niño puede ser útil considerar a las personas como si tuvieran "cajas" que contienen los sentimientos de dolor. Cada "caja" se llena con un sinnúmero de sentimientos cuando alguien que quieren fallece. Los niños chicos solo pueden tolerar el dolor de la pena en pequeñas cantidades. Tienen la habilidad de cerrar la "caja de pena" y salir a jugar, ignorando su presencia. Es precisamente esta habilidad que hace que muchos adultos piensen que los niños no sufren. Las "cajas de pena" de los niños pequeños se llenan a medida

que ven a sus padres llorar, cuando se sientan a la mesa de comida y ven una silla vacía, o a medida que observan las visitas de otros niños con amigos, tíos o tías, y abuelos. Si los sentimientos dentro de la caja crecen en intensidad o volumen el niño a veces se comportará de una manera que los confundirá a ellos y a los que los rodean. Por ejemplo: Liza estaba en su jardín infantil observando al papá de una de sus compañeras conversando sobre su trabajo en el Departamento de Policía. Ella había jugado en la casa de la niña una vez y sus padres eran muy simpáticos. Sin embargo, a medida que escuchaba sentada, se sintió llenándose de algo muy incomodo. Sentía que tenía que correr a su casa pero, evidentemente, no podía hacerlo.

A medida que pasaba el día, Liza se sentia mas incomoda y confundida. Ella solo quería pegarle a algo o a alguien. En ese instante, la hija del policía se columpió por ultima vez en el jardín. Antes de que Liza pudiera pensar, corrió hacia ella y la empujó duramente, causando que se cayera del columpio. La niña partió llorando a contarle a la profesora y Liza empezó a columpiarse hacia el cielo. Liza estaba extrañada que se sintiera tan enojada con la niña. A Liza le gustaba mucho esa niña. En ese momento ella también se puso a llorar, ya que sabía que su mami, la profesora y el padre de la niña estarían enojados con ella.

A través del proceso de duelo el niño reconoce y expresa sentimientos interiores, periódicamente abriendo la caja. A veces esto es sin intención, como al conversar con un consejero o padre -por medio de palabras o el juego- donde sus pensamientos y emociones, los contenidos de la caja, son explorados. Si el proceso de duelo es manejado adecuadamente, los niños se permitirán sentir el dolor, identificarlo, y expresarlo, ya sea en palabras, dibujos, títeres o en una actividad como los deportes o la danza. A medida que trabajan con lo que está dentro de la caja, los contenidos de la caja cambian lentamente. En algunos casos algunos sentimientos como la rabia o la culpabilidad, son desechados. Un niño puede llegar a comprender que la mami realmente no puede volver, o que pensamientos hostiles no causaron la muerte del papi. En otros casos los sentimientos como la pena o la angustia son reelaborados para que sean menos intensos o menos penetrantes.

El trabajo ayuda a los niños a mantener sus emociones bajo algún nivel de control. Empiezan a aprender a manejar y a contener sus emociones, como cuando están con los amigos o en el jardín infantil. No superan el fallecimiento, pero los sentimientos son menos dolorosos con el tiempo y el trabajo. Aprenden a vivir sin la persona en su mundo.

Ser Padres y el Dolor
Los padres tienen que aceptar que es aceptable e incluso necesario que sus hijos sientan pena o rabia y estén de duelo. Esta es seguramente la arte más difícil. Los padres pueden ayudar a sus niños empezando a elaborar un vocabulario de emociones. Es útil para los niños aprender a pensar sobre sus emociones. Poder identificar lo que un niño siente les entrega una sensación de control. ¿Es rabia, pena, angustia o culpa? No siempre está claro que impulsa su conducta, pero es importante tratar de separar el dolor de las otras emociones de la vida. Por ejemplo, Liza puede sentirse culpable y uno puede suponer que la emoción está relacionada con la muerte de su papá. Sin embargo, si uno fuera a explorar eso con ella, quizás uno se dé cuenta que ella se siente culpable porque fue cruel con su amiga. La culpabilidad es el resultado de echar de menos a su papi y de actuar de una manera agresiva con la niña que todavía tiene papá. No es culpabilidad que surge del sentimiento que ella fue responsable de la muerte de su papi.

Este conocimiento le ayuda a los padres a determinar como trabajar con el niño sobre el problema. Muy frecuentemente los padres excusan conductas desde la percepción errónea de que el niño estaba respondiendo al dolor del duelo.

Los padres también tienen que ser una influencia de confianza en el mundo del niño. Ellos tienen el poder de hacer al niño sentirse seguros con su presencia, a través del cuidado físico, con sus palabras reconfortantes y de amor, y dando una vida cotidiana estable y estructurada. Los niños buscan que les digas "todo va a estar bien", y que "estamos protegidos".

Los padres tienen que darle a los niños una manera de comunicar sus sentimientos. Dependiendo de las capacidades del niño y los recursos disponibles esto puede hacerse conversando con el padre u otro adulto de confianza que pueda escuchar sus preguntas, apoyar sus inquietudes y dar respuestas inteligentes.

Una manera de hacerlo es con libros sobre la muerte y morir. Estos libros también pueden ser útiles para los adultos que también se sienten incómodos con la muerte. Hay libros que explican qué es la muerte, los que hablan de las distintas emociones del duelo, y los que enfocan sobre como enfrentar el dolor. Algunos libros sencillamente cuentan la historia de otro niño que ha experimentado una muerte y cómo ese niño la superó.

Puedes leer estos libros juntos con sus niños y permitirles que planteen sus sentimientos y temores. Puedes preguntar si había algo en el libro que se parecía a su propia vida, o como se sienten como una manera de comenzar la discusión cuidadosamente. También puedes crear un libro casero con tu hijo. (Véase Parent and Preschooler Newsletter, September, 2001 "Writing a Life Book with our Children: A tool to help families manage life passages." (Escribir un Libro de Vida con Nuestros Niños: Una Herramienta Para Ayudar a las Familias a Manejar las Transiciones de la Vida".)

Los niños también pueden usar los dibujos. Por medio de un diario de dibujos pueden expresar sus emociones al fin del día. Los padres entonces tienen la oportunidad de hablar sobre estas emociones y asegurarle a sus hijos que el duelo, aunque doloroso, es algo que los hará crecer.

Las artesanías también pueden expresar lo que los niños no pueden decir. A los niños se les puede dar arcilla con la sugerencia de que "creen su rabia". Con lápices de cera y papel se le puede pedir al niño que "dibuje a su familia", o "dibuja lo que te da miedo".

Finalmente, simplemente saliendo de la casa y jugar puede ser terapia. Le puede dar a los niños una expresión física aceptable para que puedan expresar emociones para las cuales no tienen palabras o que no pueden expresar a través de las palabras. Cuando uno está frustrado o alterado uno sale a correr porque uno se siente mejor al volver. Uno se deshace de las emociones físicamente por medio de correr o levantar pesas, o

cualquier actividad fisica, y los niños también. Los grupos de duelo le pueden dar a los niños de más de cinco años un espacio seguro para poder conversar con otros niños que también sufren y donde no se sentirán distintos. Los niños preescolares se pueden beneficiar si el padre sobreviviente pertenece a un grupo. Entre mejor un padre enfrenta la situación, mejor trabajará el padre con sus hijos, y mejor le irá a los niños.

La madre de Liza aprendió a identificar sus emociones y que era normal sentir lo que sentía, y como manejar esos sentimientos. Aprendió que ella y Liza se iban sentir mejor; y que, lentamente, ambas empezarían a sonreír y reírse otra vez. Ella pudo comunicarle estas cosas a Liza. Con el tiempo y con apoyo y trabajo, la "caja de dolor" de la madre de Liza estaba más vacía, menos intensa y menos conmovedora. Ella pudo ayudar a Liza a olvidar a su papi; a sus helados favoritos, a la música que más le gustaba, el color de sus ojos, ayudándole a Liza a reconstruir recuerdos sobre él y al mismo tiempo ayudando a su mamá elaborar el proceso de duelo. Ella constituyó una red de apoyo que incluía otras viudas y viudos en su grupo y ese grupo también ayudó a Liza. Liza y su mamá siempre echarían de menos a su papi. Sabían que él las quería y ellas siempre lo amarían.

Kathi Morse, A.C.S.W., CTS, Coordinadora del Programa de Duelo y Trauma, El Centro Schunurmarcher de Duelo y Trauma de la Familia en "The Cottage" del Centro de Orientación de Niños y Familias de North Shore.

Perdidas del Embarazo

La perdida y el dolor que lo acompaña, es una experiencia universal y puede tocar todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas. Los perdidas e incluso los abortos tienen resultados de cambios a largo plazo en la vida de uno -relaciones, pensamientos y entimientos.

¿Por qué Esta Experiencia es tan Intensa y Conmovedora? Es una crisis, un evento inesperado que sobrepasa nuestras estrategias normales para enfrentar las cosas. Requiere más recursos, energía, y fuerza que la que usamos normalmente para manejar nuestras vida cotidianas típicas. Nos sorprende con nuestra guardia abajo y, frecuentemente, conlleva sentimientos fuertes de privación, trauma, estigma, y aislamiento. De repente pareciera que todo lo que nos rodea exacerba y nos recuerda de nuestra perdida.

¿Por qué Duele Tanto, ni Siquiera Conocíamos a Este Bebé? Todo el mundo experimenta una perdida del embarazo de una manera distinta. Casi siempre involucra un sentimiento de tristeza y profunda desilusión. Toca nuestras esperanzas y sueños, las expectativas intangibles del futuro; la fuente de una felicidad y satisfacción; nuestra fantasía del bebé perfecto y una vida perfecta. Puede afectar nuestros valores espirituales y religiosos y plantear nuevas preocupaciones sobre nuestra filosofía personal e incluso el significado de la vida.

¿Qué es Útil? Al principio nada puede mitigar el dolor de la perdida y el entimiento que este profundo dolor nunca desaparecerá. La desilusión es tan profunda que parece tocar muchos aspectos de la vida. La compasión y el apoyo son vitales, aunque eso por si solo no curará las heridas. Compartir estos pensamientos y sentimientos nuevos con otros nos harán sentimos menos solos y aislados. Saber que nos quieren y que nuestros sufrimientos son importantes reconforta. Encontrar una manera para descubrir un significado de algo que parece tan injusto y sin sentido es importante, y frecuentemente lleva a buscar fuera de nosotros y a usar esta experiencia dolorosa para ayudar a los otros de alguna manera.

¿Qué Puedo Hacer para Sentirme Mejor? Comprender que sucedió, por qué, y como puede evitarse en el futuro es importante. El duelo, o experimentar los sentimientos que acompañan la perdida, es un proceso. Generalmente ocurre de una manera cíclica y no incrementalmente como lo podríamos esperar. Ud. puede esperar sentirse bien un día, y peor al día siguiente. Las sensaciones de dolor y pena parecen llegar como una ola inesperada y fuerte. Recuerde que este proceso es normal, y que amainará y uno puede sobrevivido.

¿Donde Puedo Encontrar Más Ayuda? La perdida afecta al cuerpo, la mente y el espíritu. Cuídese físicamente y préstele atención a los cambios hormonales y físicos relacionados con el estrés. La nutrición apropiada y el insumo de líquidos parecen ser obvios, pero son fáciles de olvidar. El ejercicio puede ayudarle a sentirse mejor emocional y físicamente y la pondrá en forma otra vez. Apoyo y grupos de autoayuda ofrecen un desahogo necesario y al mismo tiempo una fuente de información adicional. No dude de usar ayuda de corto plazo de un profesional de salud mental o un grupo de apoyo.

Préstele atención a los cambios positivos interiores y a su alrededor, y esté segura que dolor agudo va a disminuir, y aunque ahora parece imposible, Ud. sentirá alegría, esperanza y vitalidad otra vez.

Adaptado con el permiso de "Pregnancy Loss: Finding the Strength to Move Forward" por Holly Shaw, R.N. Ph.D. Copyright The Cottage Family Bereavement and Trauma Center; Roslyn Heights, NY, 11577.

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NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
© Copyright 2002 NSCFGC. Printed in the United States of America.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 17, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November/December-2002

Bubbles, Magnets, and More

Science for Young Children

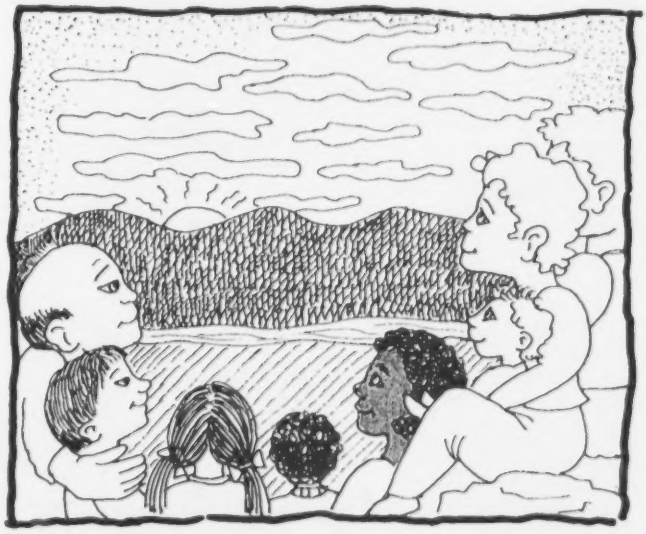
While vacationing in Vermont this past summer, I witnessed a breathtaking sunset. On an overlook high above Lake Champlain, people of all ages - including many families with young children - had chosen to spend a summer evening watching a seemingly ordinary event, the transformation of day into night.

This night was not ordinary, however. Huge, snowy cumulus clouds, wearing halos of gold, rose above the muted mauves and purples of the Adirondacks. The mountains, in turn, were bordered below by the silver sliver of the lake. As I observed the gathered crowd, children were playing games and running about while their elders were visiting with each other.

Then the light show began. A hush fell over the crowd as the setting sun transformed the western sky into a palette of peach, apricot and rose. For some time, no one moved. The children nestled against their parents and everyone sat spell-bound by the beauty of this shared experience. When the red globe of the sun finally sunk below the western sky, there was a sigh of satisfaction before the families gathered up their belongings and their children and slowly walked away.

The Gift of Wonder

As we left, I thought about how lucky those children were. They had parents who valued the beauty and majesty of nature and would make time for this adventure. It reminded me of the book written a half century ago by Rachel Carson. In it she describes how she and her grandnephew (a preschooler, in the beginning) explored the coves, meadows and forestland of the rocky Maine shoreline as co-learners. They roamed the forest floor treading on lichen crisp from summer's heat or soft from drenching rains. They explored the sea at ebb tide and listened to the pounding surf when the tide was high.



The precious gift that Rachel Carson gave to Roger, summer after summer, was that sense of wonder. She didn't try to teach or lecture. She simply joined the child in his discoveries, and delighted with him in enjoying nature. She laid the groundwork for his interest in the earth and its wonders.

Webster defines "wonder" as "the feeling of surprise, admiration and awe which is excited by something new, unusual, strange, great, extraordinary or not well understood." When we think of three- and four-year-old children in relation to the area of learning we call science, it is easy to see that, by virtue of their lack of experience with the world, there is much that is new - even strange and not well understood – in their encounters. In order to make connections regarding what they see in the world around them, children need to have an adult with them,

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to reflect and question.

Share their Excitement

Very early on children learn to ask "why" and "what" and "how" questions. It is our response to them at this stage of their development that can make a huge difference. If we choose to have a passion for the questions, if we are thoughtful about how we answer, if we share our time as those parents in Vermont did, we can help children maintain their curiosity, their disposition for learning and, yes, their sense of wonder.

If, on the other hand, we feel compelled to give right answers and feed them more information than they are asking, we will most likely teach them that older, wiser people have the answers and they cannot rely on themselves to come up with hypotheses. They will no longer have to think for themselves.

This seems like a big task to put upon the shoulders of already busy parents. But truthfully, it is more about preparing your mind for serendipity than it is about making elaborate plans. You may need to learn to share your child's excitement over things that seem very ordinary to you.

Anthills, Spiders, and Frosty Mornings

A walk in any neighborhood could provide an encounter with a busy anthill between the sidewalk cracks. Aha! What could be better for learning about the industriousness of these remarkable creatures? If your child doesn't ask you first, ask him how he thinks that neat pile of sand got there. If you need to teach, this is a wonderful opportunity to give your child a lesson in reverence for life so that the fragile ant ecosystem does not get destroyed.

Watch for the first frosty morning in late fall that covers the lawn with silver and makes it crisp underfoot. As the child looks and questions, you might join in her investigation by asking, "What is this? What's happening here?" Together, you can listen to the sound that your feet make as you walk across the lawn. You can feel the icy coldness of the fragile grasses. You can look at the beauty of the world transformed by frost. You can examine the fallen leaves for their decorative frozen patterns.

Have you ever watched a spider swinging from a single thread? Thanks to children, I have. Early one morning, as the children were gathering in a preschool classroom, Annie found a large spider hanging from the ceiling on a long silken rope. We watched the spider swing, and then begin to rise, slowly climbing toward the ceiling. "What's happening to her thread?" asked Annie. We watched some more, until we could see a tight ball of silk that was beginning to grow larger and larger on the place that we called the spider's tummy. Twenty minutes went by, and still the children watched, fascinated by the spider's task, in awe of her persistence.

Planning for the Scientist in your Child

Science for the young child depends upon encounters. Some of these encounters take us by surprise, but they can also be planned with the child in mind. A clever young kindergarten teacher wanted to "teach" her children about magnets. She gave them an array of interesting magnets – horse shoes, wands, marbles and other shapes – and some paper clips and other metal objects. The children, excited about these new materials, began to manipulate the magnets, feeling the strange pull, experiencing the force. The teacher watched and listened. She recorded the things that the children were saying as they played. She repeated their words back to them, making sure that her records were accurate. She began to draw and diagram the ideas that the children expressed. An arrow, in these drawings, indicated the direction of the pull or push of the magnet.

As the days went by, the children maintained a high level of interest in the discovery process. The teacher, working with individual children, began to put the drawings into a small book, chronologically arranged in the way they made their discoveries. Because of the firsthand knowledge that they had developed regarding magnets, the children took ownership of the project. They gave the book a title and began to use it as a reference while they continued to work. Later, the teacher confided to me that the children had learned everything about magnets that she would have

taught them if she had set out to do just that.

Planning for bubbles is another wonderful any-time-of-the-year event. Bubbles offer so much to wonder about. How does that thin film of watery solution stretch and stretch until it pops? Where do the colors come from? How come bubbles blown through square wands come out round?

To have a good time with bubbles, forget the wand-in-a-bottle variety. Children need lots of materials for real discovery. Expense should not be a major concern, and a large quantity of bubble solution can be made very cheaply. Just mix one part dishwashing liquid (such as Joy or Dawn) to ten parts warm water. If possible, let the mixture stand overnight. You will have enough bubble liquid to entertain the whole neighborhood, or at least the family.

All kinds of things can be used to make unusual bubble "pipes." Search your kitchen for anything that has holes in it. Wire hangers can be bent into a variety of shapes. Drinking straws can be cut in pieces and strung with twine in triangle shapes. Try using your hand as a bubble-maker - just put your thumb together and your pointer finger (making a triangle), and dip your hands into a large bowl of solution. Keeping your fingers together, blow slowly through the space that holds the film. Out-of-doors, bubbles work well right after a rain when the air is still and laden with moisture.

Another thing you might try is bubble making at night - the colors are unbelievable. To try something really unique, I have heard that on a cold day when the temperature is below 32 degrees, you can actually freeze a bubble. Gently blow a large bubble and release it. Then catch it on the wand and hold it still. Soon tiny crystals of ice will form over the surface of the bubble.

Although bubble-making outdoors is a wonderful summertime activity, there are advantages to providing the experience throughout the year. Ongoing experiences with different media (such as the bubble solution) are important because the more children play with something, the more they can discover.

Children are curious about the natural world and this curiosity leads to learning when fostered by a loving, caring adult. To enjoy science with young children, it helps to see the world through their eyes, to be open to feelings of surprise, admiration and awe. It helps to remember a time in your own life when all things were new, unusual, strange, great, extraordinary and not well understood.

Alice C. Brown, MA, is the Director of the Adelphi University Child Care Activity Center on the University's campus in Garden City. New York. She is also active in advocacy issues for young children and their families.

Science to Share for Parents and Kids

Why do leaves change color in the fall?

All living things need water and food. Plants do too. Their roots, extending into the ground, bring in water. We need oxygen to live but plants need carbon dioxide, which they take in from the air. With water, carbon dioxide, and sunlight, plants make their food.

It's pretty cool that plants can do this, but they need some help. They need chlorophyll (say KLAWR-O-FILL). The chlorophyll, water, and carbon dioxide all work together to make glucose, a form of sugar, that plants use for food. Chlorophyll also gives leaves that deep green color.

All summer long the tree has been storing up food so the tree can survive. When fall comes, the food factory begins to shut down for the winter, and the chlorophyll begins to fade away.

As the green begins to disappear we can see some of the other colors that were there all the time. For example there's an orange color, that comes from substances in the leaves, that we can't see under the green chlorophyll.

Something else is happening, too. In some trees, the glucose is trapped in the leaves and begins to turn red. Sometimes waste products, the leftovers from the tree's food factory remain in the leaves and this makes the brown color.

If you have a good magnifying glass you can carefully take apart the layers of a leaf and see the sections that make up the leaves.

Why is the sky blue?

When you look up at the beautiful clear blue sky, you might wonder...why isn't the sky red, or yellow. Why is it blue? In part the sky is blue because light is made up of many different colors.

Have you ever seen a rainbow? They are not only lovely to look at, but they actually show us the colors that make up light. You don't have to wait for the end of a rain shower though. If you get a prism the shape of the glass breaks light into its component colors.

So, light is made of up every color, all mixed up together, but you might still be wondering: why is the sky blue? Our atmosphere is made up of different gases that scatter some of the light. The other colors that make up light are left alone so we don't see them. But the scattered blue light is the color we see and it makes the sky look...blue.

So, if you're on the moon and look up into the sky, you'll see a black sky. In space, there is no atmosphere to scatter any part of the light.

For more information visit:
http://photoscience.la.asu.edu/photosyn/education/colorchange.html/
and http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/wxwise/bluesky.html

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DID YOU KNOW ? ? ?

Reducing Antibiotics

A new Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center study found that parents can be encouraged to reduce their use of antibiotics for viral infections.

Prescribing these drugs for common viral infections is useless against the infection but usually allays parents concern about their youngsters.

The study found that giving parents a "safety net' prescription, to be filled if the symptoms do not resolve after 48 hours, reduced parents use of antibiotics for ear infections.

Families were given either acetaminophen, ibuprofen and/or auralgan otic drops for their children's pain control. They were also given a prescription for an antibiotic and instructed not to fill it unless symptoms either increased, or did not resolve after 48 hours had passed.

"Nearly 80 percent reported that the pain medication was effective, and 62:8 percent reported that they would be willing to treat future episodes without antibiotics and with pain medication alone," reported Robert Seigel, MD, the study's main author.

▪ This study was presented at the 2002 annual meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies in Baltimore, MD.

Dear Reader ...

We have a chock-full issue this month. Alice Brown is back with an article on science – one that will inspire you and your child to explore and experience the joys of life all around us.

Our *Health Corner*, "Food for Thought," by Dr. Philip J. Landrigan is another form of science, but this piece warns us of some of the ways we've introduced harmful substances into the foods we eat every day. We might want to rethink the way food is grown, processed, and purchased.

This is also the holiday season. So our special annual gift to our readers, our *P&pN* calendar, is enclosed.

Sometimes, in the press of the chores of daily living we don't stop and remember the truly important things in life: friends and family. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, the winter holidays, or just take a day's pause, let's reflect on the good things in our lives, and smile.

We'll be back in 2003 ...

Heale Schwartzberg

Television Watching Leads to Heavier Children

Mothers of preschoolers were interviewed in 1990, and then again six years later by researchers at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati.

Compared to their TV habits in 1990, the children now watched an average of about five more hours of television a week, spending an average of about 26 hours a week in front of the television.

"Children watching more than two hours of TV per day had a higher weight status than children watching less than two hours per day," says Brian E. Saelens, Ph.D.

The researchers also noted that children who have televisions in their bedrooms also watched more television.

Children who spent more total time in watching television, including eating meals in front of the set, were more likely to be overweight.

✦ In our editorial opinion, one way to reduce children's TV viewing is to keep the television in the family area of the house, and out of the bedrooms of youngsters. And it might also encourage more family time too.

▪ This study was published in the June, 2002 issue of "Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics."

Health and Risk Factors Start Young

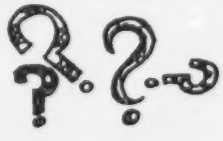
The American Heart Association's scientific statement released July, 2002 makes heart disease a pediatric problem. "People know that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of Americans but they don't fully realize that it's a silent process that begins in children," says lead author of the committee Christine L. Williams, M.D., M.P.H., immediate past chair of the American Heart Association's Committee of Atherosclerosis, Hypertension, and Obesity in the Young.

Obese children are at risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and type 2 diabetes.

Several strategies are emphasized including helping children visualize a "healthy plate." That's a plate half-filled with salad and vegetables, one-fourth with starch such as potatoes or rice and one-fourth with protein such as meat, poultry, fish or soy.

Of course, turning off the television and becoming physically active is another part of the program. Williams also suggests using activities as a reward for accomplishments rather than food.

▪ This was published in "Circulation," June 2002



Food for Thought

Eating well is important for everyone, but it is particularly crucial for children. Children are sensitive to smaller amounts of toxic substances than adults and even very small exposures to pesticides and other chemicals may interfere with normal development. Pound-for-pound children breathe more air, drink more water and eat more food than adults. So youngsters will ingest greater amounts of toxins from these sources. Children also have more years of future life in which to develop diseases that may result from early exposures to toxins.

It is obvious that a healthy diet is crucial for a child's development, but what is a "healthy diet?" Even some of the "good" foods we feed our children may contain unwanted and unhealthy chemicals. Here are some suggestions to help make sense of this often-confusing topic and keep the family diet both nutritious and safe to eat.

Be vegetable and fruit savvy

A child's diet should include at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. However, most produce available in markets has been treated with pesticides and certain pesticides appear to adversely affect child development. Pesticides are a diverse group of chemicals including neurotoxins and endocrine disruptors and they can cause damage to the lungs, reproductive organs, nervous, immune, and endocrine systems as well as cancer and birth defects.

Certain fruits and vegetables such as apples, grapes, green beans, peaches, pears, spinach, and winter squash, have higher pesticide levels than other produce and thus their consumption should be limited. All produce should be scrubbed, peeled when appropriate and rinsed well.

If available, certified organic produce is recommended because it is grown without pesticides and herbicides. The next best option is locally grown produce in season. A large amount of fruits and vegetables available in the U.S. are imported. But, imported produce should be minimized as some chemicals that are banned in the U.S. as unsafe are still used abroad.

Avoid food additives

Beware of stabilizers, preservatives, emulsifiers, artificial colors and flavorings, and other food additives. The following are additives your child should not be fed: saccharin (an artificial sweetener), caffeine (a stimulant), aspartame (a sweetener), and olestra (a fat substitute). Although the FDA has approved these additives, there has not been sufficient (if any) testing on the effects of these substances on child health. You should read the labels of the products you purchase.

Choose organic dairy products

The FDA approved recombinant bovine somatotrophin (rbST) for use in cattle in 1993 in order to increase milk production. But it also increases production of the hormone IGF-1 in milk that you drink. The long-term effects of this additive are not known, but it may disrupt endocrine function.

Minimize the use of processed foods

It would be almost impossible to entirely avoid processed foods, but the "less is more theory" applies here. Hot dogs, bacon, cold cuts, and other processed foods contain nitrates. These are used as preservatives, but when cooked, especially at high temperatures, nitrates are converted to nitrites and nitrosamines which are carcinogens that promote the development of cancer.

There is also a history of recalls of processed meats because of contamination with listeria, a bacterium that can cause serious illness.

Processed cereals, baked goods and candy should also be avoided or at least minimized because of excess sugar, saturated fats, and in the case of chocolate, caffeine. There is a growing problem with children developing diabetes and that results, in part, from the high level of sugar that our children are eating and drinking. Moreover, a diet high in saturated fat can, in time, lead to obesity and heart disease.

Cook hamburgers well

The presence of: *E. coli* 0157H7 in undercooked hamburgers has been responsible for hundreds of cases of illness. This strain of *E. coli* can be life threatening for children. The good news is that it is killed when burgers are cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Burgers that are pink in the middle should be avoided.

Buy pasteurized apple cider

Cases of *E. coli* 0157H7 have also been linked to unpasteurized apple cider contaminated with cow manure. Small local producers of apple cider often use apples that have fallen to the ground and it is possible that these apples may be contaminated with cow manure.

Continued on Page 6.

Continued from Page 5.

Choose fish wisely

Fish may contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are pollutants discharged into waterways by industry that accumulate in fatty tissue. PCBs can cross the placenta from pregnant mother to baby and have been shown to affect intelligence and cause behavior problems in children. To avoid PCBs, eat fewer fatty fish such as lake trout; avoid the skin and fatty layers of fish; eat young, small fish as they are less likely to contain harmful levels of pollutants than larger, older fish; eat panfish such as perch that feed on insects; and avoid bottom feeding fish, shellfish and crabs.

Fish may also contain mercury, a toxic heavy metal which is problematic when ingested from fish and passed from mother to fetus. Consumption of high mercury fish such as swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish, fresh tuna and some freshwater fish should be minimized, especially during pregnancy. Canned tuna, which is moderately high in mercury, should be limited to 7 oz./week for adults and 2 oz./week for children.

Think twice about peanuts

Some experts believe that serving peanut products to young children may cause them to develop sensitivities which later turn into full-blown peanut allergy which can be life threatening. Avoid serving peanut products to children under the age of three and avoid peanuts if you are pregnant. When you do serve your children peanut butter, use the name brands to avoid the possibility of aflatoxin which can cause liver failure.

Grow your own food safely

Besides being a fun activity to do with your children, gardening provides you with control of the foods you produce. Find out the history of the land where you plan to plant to avoid grounds contaminated with toxins. Do not place your garden too close to the edge of your property or next to a roadway so as to avoid unwanted chemicals. Refrain from the use of synthetic herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, and pressure treated lumber and *grow organically.*

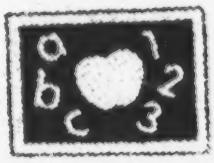
Make hand-washing routine

To prevent the spread of childhood illnesses and infections, children should wash their hands often (and since we are talking about food, before meals).

Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., M.Sc.; Director of Mount Sinai Center for Children's Health and the Environment

This article is excerpted from: "Raising Healthy Children in a Toxic World: 101 Smart Solutions for Every Family;" by Philip J. Landrigan, M.D.; Herbert L. Needleman, M.D.; Mary M. Landrigan, M.P.A. Published by: Rodale Press, 2002. Available in bookstores, amazon.com or www.healthykids-toxicworld.com

Everyday Discoveries



📖 ***Everyday Discoveries: Amazingly easy science and math using stuff you already have*** by Sharon MacDonald; Gryphon House, Inc.; Beltsville, MD; 1998; Softcover $19.95

This book was written to provide background information and lots of activities for child care centers, but parents who want to do math and science with their youngsters will find many projects that work at home. Each description contains the principles involved, what you'll need, and what you'll do step by step. It provides a new way to think about some of the things we do every day with our children. For example, in Tasting Eggs children compare the different ways eggs can be prepared and the different ways eggs taste. There are instructions for making an orange cup bird feeder. Experiment with colors by ordering crayons to match color strips. Put popcorn to the taste test by adding different toppings and rate how good they taste.

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It's a great gift for the new parents!

Let's Talk Turkey

Turkey is often a big part of our holiday menu. During the holiday season as well, many food poisoning cases are reported because of improper preparation or storage of turkey. The Nassau County Department of Health offers some safety tips to remember when handling, cooking, or storing this traditional holiday food.

• *Frozen turkey* - if you are using a frozen turkey be sure to store it directly in your home freezer and be sure it remains completely frozen until you are ready to begin to prepare it for cooking. When you are ready to thaw it, the best way is in the refrigerator at a steady, cold temperature of 40 degrees F. or lower. Allow approximately 24 hours in the refrigerator for every five pounds of turkey. For example: A 20 lb. turkey will need at least 4 days to thaw. A frozen turkey can also be thawed in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes and a 12 lb. turkey will take about 6 hours to thaw. A properly thawed turkey can then be kept in the refrigerator for one additional day before cooking. Always remember: do NOT thaw frozen turkey at room temperature because the higher temperature promotes the growth of bacteria that can cause disease. (Special note: Using a microwave oven to thaw a frozen turkey can only be done if the oven manufacturer's instructions are followed for the size of the turkey, the power level needed, and the minutes per pound. Every microwave oven varies and it is very important to remember that you must cook the turkey immediately after thawing - you cannot wait as bacteria can proliferate immediately.

• *Fresh turkey* - if you plan to use a fresh turkey, purchase it within one or two days of planned cooking and serving. Refrigerate it immediately upon bringing it home. The temperature in your refrigerator must be lower than 40 degrees F.

• *Preparation* - Remember to remove the neck and giblets and wash and dry the turkey thoroughly - both inside and out. (It is safer to cook stuffing outside of the turkey but if the turkey is to be cooked stuffed, remember to stuff it loosely.) Remember to wash everything that comes into contact with the uncooked turkey - use hot soapy water to clean hands (under the fingernails as well), sink, cutting boards, knives, utensils, and anything else that is used in working with the uncooked turkey.

• *Cooking* - Read and follow label directions for cooking the turkey. A turkey should be cooked at an oven temperature of 325 degrees or higher. A properly cooked turkey should achieve an internal temperature of 180 degrees or higher - juices should run clear. (Pop-up timers give some indication of doneness but it is strongly recommended that the internal temperature be checked in several parts of the turkey with a standard meat thermometer.) Allow a turkey to stand uncovered for at least 20 minutes before carving. If stuffed, remove the stuffing and serve it in a separate bowl. Remember that improper and inadequate cooking of turkey causes many illnesses.

• *Leftovers* - remember that leftover turkey should be removed from the bone and stored, covered, in the refrigerator within two hours of cooking. Eat leftover turkey and trimmings within two days.

With just these few cautions, turkey day can be delicious, fun, and, most important of all, safe. Gobble - Gobble!

• For more information about food safety, contact your local Department of Health or the Nassau County Department of Health at (516) 571-3680 between the hours of 9 AM and 4 PM, weekdays.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Thanksgiving Countdown ...

Thanksgiving is a great day for math! "Math?" you say. While getting ready for the arrival of guests, you can make a game of counting with your children.

First count the number of guests you are expecting with your child. Then, as you set the table, count the number of plates, glasses, napkins, forks, knives, and spoons as you place each piece on the table. One plate, two plates, three plates ... and so on.

After the table is set, it's time to arrange chairs for each place setting. Once again the count begins ... one chair, two chairs and so on. It's a good idea to say the name of each item each time you count so your child can keep the count straight. Encourage your child to put her finger on each item as she counts it.

Helping children become familiar with numbers is simple. Counting is the beginning of this understanding. When children truly understand numbers, they know that a number remains the same no matter what it represents. Four napkins or four chairs - the number is still four. The concept of math evolves, it is not learned by rote.

Thanksgiving is a nice time to begin the big countdown!

Books to Motivate Learning

📖 ***Castles, Caves, and Honeycombs*** by Linda Ashman; illustrated by Lauren Stringer; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. Told in rhyme this is a poem about all the places living creatures call home. Beavers, and honey bees, and polar beers, and people.

📖 ***Cats*** by Julie Aigner-Clark, Baby Einstein (imprint of Hyperion Books for Children); New York; 2002; Board book, $3.99. A fact about cats (most cats have long whiskers and long tails) and a drawing or photo. Cute introduction for little ones, especially if there's a cat in the house.

📖 ***Dot & Jabber and the Mystery of the Missing Stream*** by Ellen Stoll Walsh; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego; 2002; Hardcover, $15.00. The mouse detectives are back this time to discover what happened to the stream. After the storm, it disappeared! Not only a charming book (with cut paper collage illustrations) but it's also a great introduction to the scientific method. The stream? Falling twigs and branches made a dam upriver.

📖 ***The Giraffe who Cock-a-Doodle-Doo'd*** by Keith Faulkner; illustrated by Jonathan Lambert; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York; 2001; Hardcover pop-up $12.99. The rooster is roaring and the lion is squeaking. All the animals and their sounds seem to be mixed up. Maybe you and your child can sort it out.

📖 ***Look Inside an Airplane*** by Patrizia Malfatti; illustrations and project by Carlo A. Michelini; Grosset & Dunlap; New York; 2000; Poke-and-learn board book $9.99. A complete, child-appropriate look at airplanes. Briefly describes and visually depicts the parts of the plane, air traffic controllers, different ways to fly (e.g. gliders), even the airport process. If your youngster is fascinated by planes and airports, or will be taking a plane trip, this would be a great introduction.

📖 ***Plenty of Penguins*** by Sonia W. Black; illustrated by Turi MacCombie; Scholastic; New York; 1999; Softcover $3.99. Written for preschoolers and Grade 1 to learn to read, with science content describing the life of penguins.

📖 ***Puddles*** by Jonathan London; pictures by G. Brian Karas; Puffin Books; New York; 1997; Paperback $5.99. It starts with a stormy night and ends with puddles and ponds, inviting children to puddle-jump and explore, discovering the worms and frogs that live there. A gentle introduction to the wonders of the world around them. And a good reminder for parents that natural science can take place anywhere.

📖 ***Rain Forest Babies*** by Kathy Darling, photographs by Tara Darling; Walker and Company; New York; 1996; Softcover $5.95. A book to grow on with amazing photographs of the creatures that live in rain forests and jungles. Not only informative, but with a respect for life and living creatures. This mother-daughter team also produced *Arctic Babies* for the same publisher.

📖 ***Sponges are Skeletons*** by Barbara Juster Esbensen; illustrated by Holly Keller; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1993; Softcover $4.95. The sponges that most of us use in baths and kitchens are made of cellulose but there are real sponges that were once living on the floor of the ocean. Both parent and child will learn something from this book.

📖 ***The Sun is My Favorite Star*** by Frank Asch; Gulliver Books (Harcourt, Inc.); San Diego; 2000; Hardcover $15.00. We often take the sun for granted, but it fascinates one little child. And your youngster can join in. Large luminous illustrations highlight simple text: "It peeks through a hole in the fence. It casts my shadow on the wall."

📖 ***What the Sun Sees/What the Moon Sees*** by Nancy Tafuri; Greenwillow Books; New York; 1997; Hardcover $16.00. What happens during the day? The sun sees sleeping owls and crowded playgrounds. At the end of the day, the sun sets, the moon rises, and readers turn the book around and discover what the moon sees. The moon sees hooting owls and sleeping children.

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

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North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
www.northshorechildguidance.org
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
Postage Per Year.
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The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998, 99, and 2001 Parent's Choice Approval Award *En Español*

Volume 17, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November/December-2002

Burbujas, Imanes, y Mucho Más

Ciencia Para los Niños Jóvenes

Mientras estábamos de vacaciones en Vermont durante el veranos pasado, presencié una puesta de sol conmovedora. En un mirador sobre el Lago Champlain, personas de todas las edades –incluyendo muchas familias con niños pequeños- habían optado por pasar una noche verano mirando un evento supuestamente común, la transformación del día en noche.

Sin embargo, esta noche no fue normal. Grandes nubes cúmulos blancos, rodeadas de auroras doradas, ascendían sobre sobrios colores malvas y púrpura de la montañas Adirondacks. A su vez, las montañas estaban rodeadas en la parte inferior por el fragmento plateado del lago. A medida que observaba a la gente, los niños estaban jugando y corriendo por todas partes mientras que los mayores se encontraban.

Entonces empezó el juego de luces. Un silencio descendió sobre la multitud a medida que el sol poniente transformó el cielo en una paleta de colores durazno, damasco y rosado. Por un tiempo, nadie se movió. Los niños se acurrucaban con sus padres y todo el mundo estaba sentado transportado por la belleza de su experiencia compartida. Cuando el globo rojo del sol finalmente se hundió en el cielo, hubo un suspiro de satisfacción antes de que las familias juntaran sus enseres y sus niños y se retiraran lentamente.

El Don del Asombro

A medida que nos íbamos, pensé que suerte tenían esos niños. Tenían padres que valoraban la belleza y majestad de la naturaleza y le daban tiempo a esta aventura. Me recordó del libro escrito hace medio siglo por Rachel Carson. En el describe como ella y su sobrino nieto (un preescolar, al principio) exploraban las ensenadas, praderas y los bosques de la costa rocosa de Maine como condiscípulos. Recorrieron el bosque pisando los líquenes firmes por el calor del verano o blandos por la copiosa lluvia. Exploraron el mar durante marea baja y escucharon las estrepitosas olas cuando la marea estaba alta.

El valioso don que Rachel Carson le dio a Roger, verano tras verano, fue el sentimiento de asombro. Ella no intento enseñar o dictarle cátedra. Ella simplemente se unió al niño y sus descubrimientos y se deleitaba con él en el gozo de la naturaleza. Ella sentó las bases para su interés en la tierra y sus maravillas.

El diccionario Webster define "asombro" como "el sentimiento de sorpresa, admiración y fascinación que es suscitado por algo nuevo, inusual, extraño, grande, extraordinario y no entendido bien". Cuando pensamos en niños de tres o cuatro años en relación al tema que llamamos ciencia, es fácil ver que, debido a su falta de experiencia con el mundo, hay mucho que es nuevo -incluso extraño y que no se comprende bien- en sus descubrimientos. Con el fin de establecer vínculos en relación a lo que ven en el mundo que los rodea, los niños deben tener un adulto que los acompañe, para poder reflexionar y cuestionar.

Comparte su Entusiasmo

Desde muy temprana edad, los niños aprenden a preguntar "por qué" y "qué" y "cómo". Nuestra respuesta a ellos en esta etapa de su desarrollo puede ser de suma importancia. Si optamos por tener una pasión por estas preguntas, si tenemos conciencia sobre como respondemos, si compartimos nuestro tiempo como esos padres en Vermont, podemos ayudar a los niños a mantener su curiosidad, su disposición a aprender y su sentimiento de asombro.

Si, por el otro lado, nos sentimos obligados a darles las respuestas correctas y entregarles más información de la que piden, seguramente les enseñaremos que las personas de más edad y más sabiduría tienen las respuestas y que ellos no pueden contar en si mismos para formular hipótesis. Ellos nunca más tendrán que pensar independientemente.

Esto parece una tarea inmensa para poner en los hombros de padres que ya están muy ocupados. Pero para decir verdad, se trata de preparar su mente para las casualidades mas que para hacer complejos planes. Quizás tengas que aprender a compartir el entusiasmo de tu hijo sobre las cosas que te parecen ordinarias.

Hormigueros, Arañas y Mañanas de Escarcha

Una caminata por cualquier barrio puede producir un encuentro con un activo hormiguero entre las grietas de la vereda. ¡Aja! ¿Qué podría ser mejor para aprender sobre las múltiples actividades de estas singulares criaturas? Si su niño no le pregunta primero, pregúntele como cree que ese delicado montón de arena llegó hasta ahí. Si tienes que enseñar, esta es una magnífica oportunidad de darle a su hijo una lección sobre respeto a la vida para que ese frágil ecosistema de hormigas no sea destruido.

Espere la primera mañana con escarcha a fines del otoño que cubre el patio de plateado y que lo hace crujir bajo nuestros pies. A medida que el niño observa y hace preguntas, tu puedes sumarte a su investigación preguntando, ¿"Qué es esto? ¿Qué está pasando aquí"? Juntos pueden escuchar el sonido que hacen sus pies a medida que caminan sobre la grama. Uds. sentirán el congelado frió de las frágiles hierbas. Pueden mirar la belleza del mundo transformado por la escarcha. Pueden examinar las hojas caídas y ver los diseños decorativos del hielo.

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¿Has visto alguna vez a una araña suspendida de un solo hilo? Gracias a los niños, yo lo he visto. En una mañana muy temprano, cuando los niños se reunían en su aula de preescolares, Anita encontró una gran araña colgada del techo de un largo hilo sedoso. Miramos a la araña balancearse, y después empezar a subir lentamente hacia el techo. ¿"Qué le está pasando a su hilo"? dijo Anita. Miramos más hasta que pudimos ver una compacta bola de seda que empezaba a ponerse más grande en el lugar que nosotros llamábamos el estómago de la araña. Pasaron veinte minutos y los niños aun miraban, fascinados por el trabajo de la araña, asombrados por su persistencia.

Planificando el Científico en su Niño La ciencia para el niño joven depende de hallazgos. Algunos de estos hallazgos nos toman por sorpresa, pero también pueden ser planificados con el niño en mente. Una astuta joven profesora de kindergarten quería "enseñarles" a sus niños sobre los imanes. Les entregó una variedad de imanes interesantes – herraduras, varitas, bolitas y de otras formas- y algunos clips de papel y otros objetos de metal. Los niños, entusiasmados con estos nuevos materiales, empezaron a manipular los imanes, sintiendo la extraña atracción, experimentando la fuerza.

El profesor observó y escuchó. Ella escribió las cosas que los niños decían a medida que jugaban. Ella les repetía sus palabras, asegurándose que sus apuntes eran exactos. Empezó a dibujar y esquematizar las ideas que los niños expresaban. Una flecha en estos dibujos indicaba la dirección de la atracción o empuje del imán.

Pasaron los días y los niños mantuvieron un alto nivel de interés en el proceso de descubrimiento. El maestro, trabajando con niños individuales, comenzó a poner los dibujos en un pequeño libro, compuesto cronológicamente y de la manera en que ellos hicieron sus descubrimientos.

Debido a los conocimientos de primera mano que habían desarrollado en cuanto a los imanes, los niños se apropiaron del proyecto. Le pusieron título al libro y lo empezaron a usar como referencia a medida que continuaban con el trabajo.

Más tarde, la profesora me contó confidencialmente que los niños habían aprendido todo sobre los imanes que ella les hubiera enseñado si se hubiese planteado esa tarea.

Planificar burbujas es otro evento maravilloso para cualquier época del año Las burbujas ofrecen tantas cosas de las cuales uno puede asombrarse. ¿Cómo puede esa delgada solución acuosa estirarse y estirarse hasta que revienta? ¿De donde vienen los colores? ¿Por qué las burbujas que son sopladas a través de varitas cuadradas salen redondas?

Para pasarlo bien con las burbujas, olvide el tipo de la varita en la botella. Los niños necesitan muchos materiales para verdadero descubrimiento. Los gastos no deben ser una preocupación importante y una gran cantidad de solución para burbujas puede fabricarse a bajo costo. Solo mezcle una parte de detergente para lavar platos (como Joy o Dawn) con diez partes de agua tibia. Si es posible deje que la mezcla quede preparada toda la noche. Tendrás suficiente líquido para burbujas para poder entretener a todo el barrio, o por lo menos a toda la familia.

Todo tipo de cosas pueden usarse para hacer "pipas" de burbujas extrañas. Busque en su cocina cualquiera cosa que tenga hoyos. Los colgadores de ropa de alambre pueden ser doblados en diferentes formas. Las pajitas para beber pueden ser cortadas en pedazos y amarradas con hilo en forma de triángulos. Intente usar su mano para hacer burbujas – simplemente ponga su pulgar y su índice juntos formando un triangulo, y meta sus dedos a un pote grande de solución. Manteniendo sus dedos juntos, sople suavemente por el espacio que tiene la película. Al aire libre, las burbujas funcionan bien después de la lluvia cuando el aire está tranquilo y saturado de humedad.

Otra cosa que pueden hacer es hacer burbujas en la noche –los colores son increíbles. Para hacer algo verdaderamente único, me han dicho que en un día helado cuando la temperatura es menos de 0 grados Celsius, uno puede congelar una burbuja. Suavemente sople una burbuja grande y suéltela. Después tómela en la varita y manténgala inmóvil. Rápidamente, pequeños cristales de hielo se formaran en la superficie de la burbuja.

Aunque hacer burbujas al aire libre es una maravillosa actividad veraniega, hay ventajas en ofrecer esta experiencia a todo el año. Experiencias continuas con distintos medios (como con la solución de burbujas) son importantes porque entre más juegan los niños con algo, más pueden descubrir.

Los niños tienen curiosidad sobre el mundo natural y esta curiosidad conlleva al aprendizaje cuando es fomentada por un adulto cariñoso e interesado. Para disfrutar de la ciencia con niños pequeños, es útil ver el mundo a través de sus ojos, de estar abierto a los sentimientos de sorpresa, admiración y asombro. Es útil recordar un momento en tu propia vida cuando tosas las cosas eran nuevas, extrañas, sorprendentes, grandes, extraordinarias, y no bien comprendidas.

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published 10 Issues Per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-993-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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www.northshorechildcenter.org
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$32
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$52
Other Countries Add $17
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The *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* is Underwritten by Jane & Marty Schwartz

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